Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1995 ISSUE #56
VOLUME X, NO. 2 $3.95USA

Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1995
ISSUE #56

COVER: Stephen A. Daniele pays homage to Frank Frazetta, and brings to life the last troll on Athas in "Grave Circumstances."

And the Survey Says . . .

Responses to last issue's survey have begun to arrive. We haven't tallied the lot yet, but we're eagerly reading the comments attached to them. Already we're drawing a few general conclusions.

Mostly, we're reading that you don't want radical changes. The large majority of respondents are very happy with the past nine years of the magazine. Most like a variety of adventure levels, settings, and lengths, and strongly prefer adventures set in a "generic" AD&D® game world.

After generic settings, the FORGOTTEN REALMS® and RAVENLOFT® settings are the clear favorites, with other TSR game worlds too close to call. The BIRTHRIGHT™ campaign seems popular, especially considering its very recent release, and PLANESCAPE® scenarios are easily the most controversial, with both passionate supporters and opponents.

The good news here is that we've been receiving many submissions for RAVENLOFT adventures, including some excellent ones, and two of our best authors also have proposed BIRTHRIGHT adventures. Expect to see something from each of these settings next year. (But writers note that we still need more generic AD&D submissions.)

The response to this year's survey has convinced us to run one more often, perhaps annually. While we receive a steady influx of reader mail, seeing the survey results gives us a better general view of what you want in the magazine. To help us keep track in the meantime, drop us a line after each issue (a postcard or email to tsr.mags@genie.geis.com will do), noting your favorite adventure. If we receive enough such notes, we'll start printing the results of the "favorite adventure poll" in each issue.

Vol. X, No. 2

Publisher: TSR, Inc.
Associate Publisher: Brian Thomsen
Editor-in-Chief: Pierce Watters
Editor: Dave Gross
Associate Editor: Anthony J. Bryant
Assistant Editor: Michelle Vuckovich
Art Director: Larry Smith
Cartographer: Michael Scott
Typesetting: Tracey Isler
Subscriptions: Janet L. Winters
Advertising: Cindy Rick

Printed in U.S.A.

The Readers — **LETTERS** 6

Willie Walsh — **BRIOCHT**
(AD&D® Adventure, character levels 10–12; 50 total levels) Don't mistake this wily dragon for a bookwyrm. 8

Kent Ertman — **JANX'S JINX**
(AD&D Adventure, character levels 1–2; 6 total levels) "Sick as a dog" takes on a whole new meaning 22

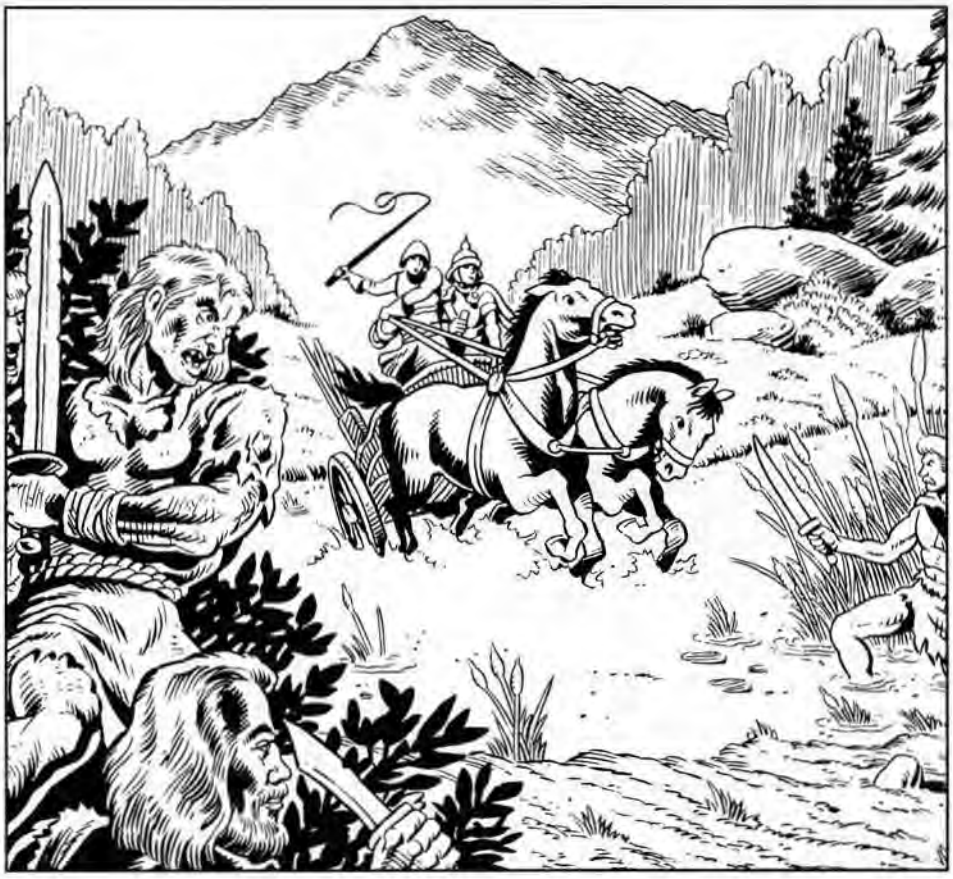
J. Lee Cunningham — **A WATERY DEATH**
(AD&D Adventure, character levels 7–10; 42 total levels) There's no place like home for a summoned elemental. 28

Steve Johnson — **THE BIGGER THEY ARE**
(AD&D Adventure, character levels 2–4; 24 total levels) Sometimes it's the little things that get to you 32

Bill Slavicsek — **GRAVE CIRCUMSTANCE**
(DARK SUN® Adventure, character levels 5–7; 27 total levels) Take a first journey into the new lands of Athas 38

David Howery — **THE LAND OF MEN WITH TAILS**
(AD&D adventure, character levels 5–7; 30 total levels) Explore the Dark Continent, meet strange new people, and let them have you for dinner 50

Semper aliquid de novis ex Africa.
There is always something new out of Africa.
Pliny the Elder



BRIOCHT

BY WILLIE WALSH

Ocras and the killer wile

Artwork by David Day

Briocht was written drawing on Irish folklore and the Celt's Campaign Sourcebook *(HR3). Willie later used it as a competition module in his game group's annual tournament in early 1995.*

"Briocht" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–5 PCs of levels 10–12 (about 50 total levels). It is set in a Celtic campaign land, but it does not follow exactly the guidelines of the *Celts Campaign Sourcebook*. Player characters are assumed to be of good alignment and, though "foreigners," to be friends of a family whose roots in the locality run deep.

The scenario can be adapted to another setting as long as an ancient temperate forest with large, impenetrable tracts exists there. For instance, tribes of elves could replace the Celts if the adventure were moved to the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign world.

The dungeon area, later, features a library that requires some pre-game preparation by the DM. Likewise, the spellbook of Ocras the Wizard may need to be studied beforehand in case it supplies the PCs with spells inappropriate to their campaign.

Adventure Background

The expression "to kill someone with kindness" might have been coined about Celts. Two Celtic chieftains are trying to do just that to one another. When Magg of the O'Cilligh tribe hears a messenger has come again from his neighbors, the Ui Riadas, he shudders, wondering what expensive present will soon be added to his store as a gift from the neighboring chieftain, Turl. Turl, for his part, is disappointed when, a day later, a warrior from the O'Cilligh territory lands on his doorstep with some great treasure, freely given, by Magg himself.

The reason, of course, is that the generous gift-giving is a kind of bloodless feud, carried out between equals. The loser will be unable to match a gift in excellence and generosity, and then (the gods forbid!) he will go to his neighbor and declare himself in honor debt and at the service of the other chieftain. Needless to say, neither wants to lose, and each is nearing his wit's end to come up with a better gift each time the other reciprocates. And there is now little room in either's treasury with all the gold torcs, rings, armlets, gem-encrusted swords, and whatnots recently acquired.

For the Dungeon Master

Magg O'Cilligh is losing the "battle." His original treasury is full, but mostly with raw gold and silver, not with artisans' baubles or fine artworks in metals and gems appropriate to this kind of situation. Furthermore, he will be in honor debt if he can't produce something decisive by the end of the week, when Turl Ui Riada's messenger is expected to return. So he has begun a risky venture—he has quietly hired a wizard to create a magical treasure—a *helm of invulnerability*—something Magg will pretend to have owned all along (for it would be dishonorable merely to purchase an item for gift-giving) and which he'll give to Turl in the sure and certain knowledge of winning the feud.

The wizard, Ocras (an epithet meaning "hunger," placed on him by the tribesmen who note his prodigious appetite for all manner of food) was approached after a mighty feast in the O'Cilligh stronghold of Abhainn Órga at which he was a guest. He would indeed create a magical helmet to Magg's specifications, making the wearer virtually invulnerable to all attacks, unless it is an O'Cilligh who is the attacker! It goes without saying that Magg won't mention this "small quirk" of the wondrous headgear when it is presented.

The O'Cilligh chieftain thinks his plan is fool-proof and waits impatiently for Ocras's report as to the progress of the project. Unfortunately, Ocras has run into unexpected problems, not the least of which is the old green dragon, Briocht, who has a taste for trickery. . . and wizards.

As the day draws nearer to the arrival of the Ui Riada warrior, Magg is worried that Ocras will fail to show up. He curses himself for trusting a wizard, but he is in a quandary. He can't send warriors from his own household to Ocras's cottage in the woods for fear they might learn of his intended trickery, which dishonors the tribe as well as their chief. Neither can he ask Turl Ui Riada's men to investigate, for obvious reasons. He needs someone neutral, uninvolved in local politics.

Enter the player characters!

Beginning The Adventure

The PCs can become involved in at least two different ways. The first is that they rescue Nial O'Cilligh, a nephew of Magg, and are honored in the chieftain's house, later to be approached by Magg, who asks them to find Ocras. The second assumes they are foreign friends of the O'Cillighs and come to visit, when Magg takes them into his confidence and asks them to seek out the wizard.

If the first introduction is used, the DM should use the boxed text, below. If the adventurers are already known to the tribe, skip to Magg's Proposition.

> The maps mark these new lands simply, "Tribals." Expecting the worst, you keep a weather-eye open for attack by roving warrior bands as you descend into the valley that seems to hold the majority of settlements. Once there, however, the appearance of the natives is surprisingly ordinary. They dress in typical peasant garb and seem to enjoy a pastoral existence, herding cows and sheep, growing crops, and hunting in the dotted woodlands that grace the green countryside.
>
> Wondering how the cartographers got things wrong, or if perhaps your definition of "tribe" is insufficient, you descend toward the nearest village. A small stream crosses the road in a wide ford. There you see the first signs of trouble.
>
> About to cross toward you is a chariot pulled by two chestnut horses, both brightly decorated in paint and colored barding. The charioteer is plainly attired in good clothing designed more for the weather than for display. His passenger, a warrior in bright tunic and high helm, grips the wicker framework of the vehicle with a self-assured air. A brace of throwing spears rest in a pocket on the chariot's side.
>
> But it isn't the sight of the warrior's approach that forebodes trouble. On this side of the stream, you see a force of men arrayed in ambush. They will fall upon the chariot just as it struggles up the bank out of the water, when it is most difficult to maneuver out of danger.

Any druid or bard with the party immediately recognizes a Celtic society existing in this valley. Such characters know that local organization is indeed tribal, but in a way perhaps unfamiliar to the other adventurers.

If the bard or druid stands between the ambushers and their victims, all battle immediately ceases. All Celtic warriors defer to druids and bards, whose status equals that of a chieftain in Celtic lands. Bards are particularly respected, in part because of their ability to curse those who offend him. (See *HR3*/21–22). Both classes gain a +1 bonus per two levels of experience on encounter reactions with Celtic humans.

The warrior in the chariot is Nial O'Cilligh, son of Magg O'Cilligh's divorced sister. He and his charioteer are visiting the valley to check on the number of cattle there. If stocks are low, plans must be made to raid a neighbor's lands before winter.

Nial's charioteer, Locun, is a friend but also a subservient and unarmed retainer of the tribe. Unless the PCs intervene, the duo are completely surprised by the ambush as they struggle ashore from the ford.

The ambushers number a dozen ragged men, known locally as *gadaithe*—bandits who refuse service to any of the local chieftains. All were either banished for serious crimes, deformity, or anti-social behavior precluding them from existing in Celtic society. (But all defer to the wishes of a druid, in any event).

The gadaithe have been waiting to ambush some rich traveler on the open road, rather than raid a farmhouse which are usually fortified and well-defended. They hope to slay Nial and Locun, stealing the fine chariot, the horses, decorative weapons and helmet to exchange later for food and supplies outside the valley.

Should the PCs decide not to intervene, Nial and Locun are subject to one volley of arrows and spears from the bandits before initiative. The DM can then run a combat as normal or simply describe how the duo are eventually over-powered and pummelled unconscious, despite Locun's charioteering skills and Nial's use of his del chliss, spear-throwing skill. (See below).

If Nial and Locun are killed, the adventurers can be located later by warriors of the O'Cilligh household and escorted to the hill-fort to be interviewed about their role in the death of the chief's nephew.

Nial is grateful if aided, and honor bound to reward the adventurers with

the hospitality of his family's house. It would be a disgrace for the PCs to refuse to stay for a short while at the O'Cilligh stronghold once invited.

Nial O'Cilligh: AL CG; AC 7; MV 12; F6; hp 33; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 16, C 14, I 12, W 11, Ch 14; ML 15; long sword; four throwing spears (as javelins); one fighting spear; helmet.

Nial, like many Celtic warriors, uses only a shield and a helmet as armor. He has the following non-weapon proficiencies: animal handling (10); running (8); riding, land-based (14); charioteering (18); del chliss* special.

Heroic Feats

Celtic hero-sagas are full of fantastic feats of arms. In game terms, heroic feats are treated as weapon proficiencies, unless stated otherwise. All are available only to warriors (except the tathlum, which is also available to druids).

An unskilled warrior may attempt a feat but at a penalty. The penalty is equal to the number of slots required multiplied by minus two. (e.g., a feat requiring one slot can be attempted by an unskilled warrior at –2 penalty; a feat requiring three slots may be attempted at –6 penalty, and so on).

Full details about heroic feats can be found in *HR3*/28–29. The single skill mentioned in this module is shown below.

Del Chliss

This is a feat using a thrown spear. It requires two weapon proficiency slots, and the character must already be proficient with the throwing spear in order to learn the feat. If an attack roll succeeds by 2 or more, the target suffers double damage. No proficiency check is necessary.

Anyone trying to catch such a spear is at –2 penalty on his Dexterity check. It isn't possible to use the del chliss feat to throw a spear which was caught in the same round, as it is necessary to throw the spear with a special grip.

Nial is 22 years old and a typical warrior; bold in battle, generous to friend and foeman alike, and charged with the protection of those considered weaker than himself (provided they are members or subjects of the tribe). He is glad to see strangers to whom he can demonstrate his bravery and generosity, thereby spreading the reputation of the O'Cillighs to the unknown world beyond their valley. Any bandits he personally slays are beheaded later, the grisly trophies taken back to the ringfort for display.

Locun Mac Giolla: AL NG; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); S 13, D 17, C 13, I 12, W 11, Ch 15; ML 14; NWP: charioteering (19) and hunting (10).

Locun is 30 years old and a member of the commoner class. He is a great friend and adviser to Nial, though Nial is considered his superior. It's the charioteer's job not only to drive Nial to battle, but also to keep the warrior on the "straight and narrow" in matters of duty. Often charioteers provoke their masters into battle frenzy by questioning their courage when faced with a dangerous foe. Though Nial has not the gift of the true hero's warp frenzy, or *riastarthe*, Locun still advises or guides him in all matters concerning honor and loyalty if such are in question.

Gadaithe, local bandits (12): INT average; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; F3; hp 15 each; THAC0 18; AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; XP 65 each. Each of the gadaithe is armed with a long sword, a short bow with 12 arrows, and a stabbing spear. Unlike the local warriors (and a measure of their "cowardice" according to local custom), they wear leather armor and carry round shields.

Celts who meet PCs in metal armor are highly amused by the PCs' perceived timidity. Celtic warriors won't be convinced to emulate them without losing face among their friends.

The gadaithe flee if they lose half their number in battle. As mentioned earlier, they are outcasts from Celtic society, but they stay in the region to raid their former neighbors, perhaps out of a sense of vengeance, but maybe also because of a need to be close to their own culture.

Abhainn Órga—Hill-Fort of the O'Cillighs

The O'Cilligh stronghold is a rath, or hill-fort. Located further up the valley, it stands above the Golden River, for which it is named.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach the fortress:

> You are led to the stronghold of the O'Cilligh clan, of whom Nial is an important member—a nephew, you gather, of the ruling Rí, or chieftain. The fortress is on a wide hill overlooking the valley, a rampart of dry stones fitted with care to create a large, circular wall, 30′ tall. Sentries patrol this rampart, their long spears raised.
>
> The gates of the fortress are set deep in the wall, and lead through a narrow place into the interior—a wide ring set with circular houses and huts thatched with rushes from the river below.
>
> The largest of the buildings, a great hall of considerable importance, is the home and court of the Rí, Magg O'Cilligh. You are surprised to see many severed heads, some reduced to mere skulls, hanging about the door-posts of the house.
>
> Led into the smoky interior, you find a great table. Sitting at its head, a little above the level of the floor, is a powerful man with red hair. His similarity to Nial marks him as a close kinsman. With grave though proud countenance, he stands to receive you as guests in his house.

The hill-fort does not play an important part in the adventure, but its brief description appears in case the DM chooses to create more adventures in this area. The fort is not a true homestead, and the majority of the warriors attached to it live in the huts and lands about the valley. They are mustered in time of war or raids, and only a small guard maintains the chieftain in his home.

1. Standing Stones. The builders of the Abhainn Órga fort placed upright stones in the ground. They are designed to break up an enemy charge, whether on horseback or on foot. A wide ditch must also be negotiated before one may attack the walls and gates.

2. The Great Hall. The largest hut is home to the chieftain and his immediate household. Apart from the hall itself, there are apartments for the Rí, his wife, his guests, and his champions. There is also an underground vault, accessible only with a key owned by

Magg O'Cilligh, and a secret tunnel by means of which the family may escape in the event of overwhelming odds.

The heads decorating the building are those of fallen foemen. The Celts believe the strength of their opponents is given to them if they possess such trophies. In game terms, these trophies have no special affect.

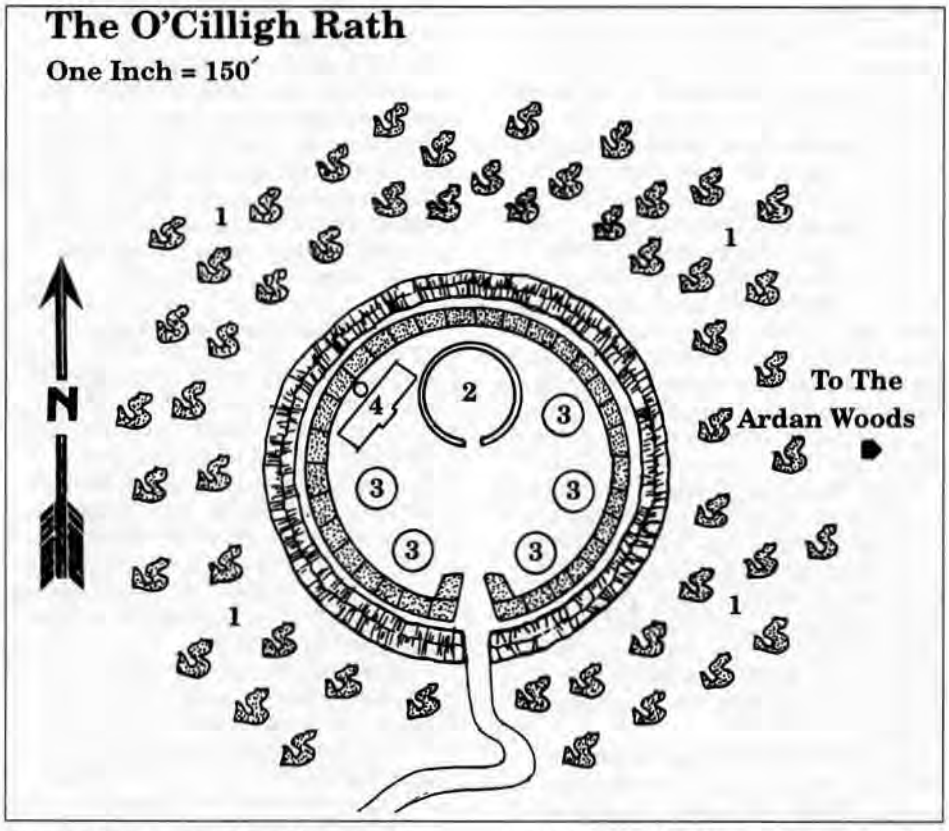
3. Retainers' Huts. The warriors of the household live in these huts. There is a single room in each where entertaining and everyday affairs must carry on in tandem. Some of these likewise display the severed heads and captured weaponry of fallen enemies.

There are ten such warriors in total living in the huts:

Household warriors (10): INT average; AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; F3; hp 24 each; THAC0 18; AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 120.

The warriors are typically armed with two spears each; three of them also wield short swords.

4. Stables and Stores. The horses and stored foodstuffs of the fortress are here. Outside is a deep well descending through the hill to the water table, all of 150′ below.



Magg's Proposition

Once the PCs have settled in and have been properly feted, Magg takes the first opportunity to propose that they perform a service for which he will pay them handsomely. Twenty miles east of the Abhainn Órga fort, on the wooded sides of the valley itself, there lives a wizard named Ocras. This wizard was to deliver a magical helmet of Celtic design to the chieftain some three days past, but he has failed to do so. The helmet was to be a surprise gift for a neighboring chieftain. To preserve the secret (Magg says) his own warriors cannot go to the woods—known as the Ardan Woods—in case their errand becomes known.

Ocras has a cottage some three miles or so inside the wood, on a track wending its way among the trees to no-one-knows what end. The wood is generally avoided by the locals, as it is very old and rumored to be home to several monsters best left to their own devices. Magg wonders if the wizard has fallen prey to one of these. If the PCs wonder aloud whether the wizard has kept his payment and reneged on the commission, Magg says he has considered this possibility too.

In return for the PCs' errand, Magg offers them 1,000 gp each in gold ornaments and bullion. Magg is at pains to indicate the lack of household warrior-involvement has nothing to do with cowardice—the chieftain has told no one but the adventurers about the helmet, and he cautions them not to spread the story further. Magg imposes the condition that the adventurers must not discuss their mission with anyone, even a druid, for the political ramifications (none of which he elaborates upon) may be costly should the nature of the item be known before the gift is given.

Magg should appear reasonable and truthful in his dealings with the adventurers—he is, after all, telling the truth about the situation, if not showing the PCs the entire picture. It is considered a great honor for a stranger to be given a task by the local chieftain, who is demonstrating his trust in the newcomer to roam free in his tuath without doing harm. If no one in the party realizes this, the DM might hint of the fact to them using an NPC such as Nial, once it's apparent to him they are staying in the tuath. Magg, of course, isn't actually displaying much trust; he is desperate to win the gift-giving feud and the PCs are his only means to obtain the helmet.

The Ardan Woods

The woods are indeed old. They are mainly oaklands, stretching for a hundred miles at their farthest extremity from Abhainn Órga, on the walls of the valley and out onto the plain beyond. Druids are the only ones who know the woods intimately, but even they keep out of the very center, which is dark and the haunt of monsters. Among these creatures is a green dragon named Briocht.

Briocht (pronounced Bree-okt—a word meaning "wile")—lairs in a great cave beneath the floor of the forest, where few except the most stupid or powerful monsters tread. Lately, he has grown curious about the human lands that lie outside the woods, so he has journeyed forth in disguise, using a *ring of polymorph self* he acquired from a traveler in the woods. From observation and rumor, he learned of Ocras and decided to pay him a call.

Wearing his magical ring, the polymorphed dragon appeared on Ocras's doorstep as a beggar. Unable to refuse a poor man the hospitality of his house, Ocras let him in. After a meal and some conversation in which the beggar revealed himself to have some understanding of the magical arts and to be an intelligent and eloquent guest, Ocras was put at his ease. The talk turned to the simple things. Ocras declared a dislike for the complications that life often throws a person's way—the laws, the taxes, even the notions of riddles and rhymes some wizards surround themselves with. Briocht agreed to all he heard, secretly thinking this man was a fool.

When Ocras left the room to get more wine, Briocht took the opportunity to examine a certain door which, his senses told him, should lead nowhere, for there was no other door in the exterior of the building except the front one. The password to open this portal was the wizard's name, for what else would he use—he liked to keep things simple, after all?

This is how Briocht learned the cottage was no ordinary hovel, but a modified *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*. There were halls and rooms aplenty, laboratories and treasure houses fit for a mighty mage, or for a dragon.

When Ocras returned, Briocht was nowhere to be found. Opening the door to his magical mansion, he walked the halls searching. In a great chamber he discovered not a human guest but a mighty green dragon. Despite his spells, Ocras was taken by surprise and quickly slain.

Briocht remains in the mansion, exploring and taking over the magical items and treasures of the dead wizard. He is the reason Ocras did not deliver the *helm of invulnerability*, which lies completed in one of his vaults.

Briocht hopes to use the magical dwelling as a base for his study of the neighboring kingdoms as a prelude to conquest. Unfortunately, Ocras's dealings with Magg O'Cilligh threaten the dragon's plans.

The PCs in the Woods

As mentioned, the woods begin about 20 miles east of Abhainn Órga, following a high ridge (an "ardan") along the valley's edge. An earthen track runs into the wood, passing Ocras's cottage on its way into the deeper and relatively unknown parts.

The DM may prepare a map of the woods, if he desires, including the features described below. The trail is more-or-less straight, running from west to east with four side branches along its length (areas 6, 8, 9, and the cottage itself, at area 10.) It is also bisected by the river halfway to the cottage. See area 7, below.

5. The Woodsman's Cottage.

> The trail passes beneath the spreading arms of ancient oak trees, occasionally going through a clearing where an old oak has fallen, and younger saplings struggle up toward the light. Though the undergrowth is mainly thin beneath the boughs, you find the wood dark and visibility reduced dramatically on each side of the path. Any enemy could be watching from the darkness.
>
> Up ahead, the canopy thins again, this time beneath a clearing which looks man-made. A ramshackle hut, made of hurdles and roofed with sods, stands by the side of the trail. A large woodpile of cut branches rests nearby. At the rear of the hut is a bin made of iron and covered with a metal sheet fully 10' across. Woodsmoke curls up lazily from slits cut in this lid.

This is the home of Gerdrich, a local woodcutter, and his family. Gerdrich earns a living making charcoal in the iron burner at the back of his hut. The oaken branches are slowly reduced to charcoal over a day and a night of smoldering. The charcoal is removed in sacks every few weeks and sold to a dealer in the valley. Gerdrich uses the money he's paid to buy items not readily available to him in the lonely wood.

Gerdrich is usually off somewhere in the wood during daylight hours, and the PCs are most likely to meet his wife, Yerris, and their four children, if they call at the hovel during the day. (The PCs may call at the house if they believe it is Ocras's cottage, or if they look for directions or shelter). Yerris herds her children into the hut and closes the door if the party's approach is noticed beforehand. She is loath to speak to anyone she does not know, but she renders assistance if someone is hurt, and she gives directions if that will encourage the PCs to leave.

Gerdrich, Yerris, and their four offspring are wereboars who prefer to live in privacy. They know of Ocras, as they have a nodding acquaintance with the wizard (they greet him as he passes, but they have never entertained him nor been to his house), and can tell PCs of the possible dangers at areas 7, 8, and 9, following, if the party befriends them. The family lost a piglet to the trapper at area 9, so they have no love for the monster.

The wereboars are short-tempered and take offense easily. The party should not have an easy time befriending them—offers of food receive a cold response; offers of payment for lodging or food offend the wereboars. If the PCs offer to trade goods (wine, good clothing, furs, etc.) or services (help repairing the many holes in the hut, housework, or woodcutting), the wereboars readily accept. Slaying the trapper at area 9 will ensure lifelong friendship from the unusual family.

Gerdrich and **Yerris** (wereboars): INT average; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+2; hp 29, 24; THAC0 15; AT 1; Dmg 2–12 (wereboar form only) or by weapon type; SD silver or +1 or better to hit; SZ M; ML elite (13) or special; XP 650 each; *MM*/235.

Neither lycanthrope checks morale when defending their young, and Yerris also gains a +2 bonus to attack if she must defend them. If wounded in combat with a lycanthrope, a character has a 1% chance per hp damage suffered of contracting the disease. (See *MM*/230 for details). The young are non-combative and have 2d4 hit points each.

There is nothing of real value in the ramshackle hut, but taking anything without the family's permission earns their enmity.

6. Trail Home. A track branches off down into the valley part way along the main trail, leading the characters to a point some miles east of the Abhainn Órga fort. They may take it if they wish to leave the woods in a hurry (and they might!).

7. The River Crossing.

> The trail comes to the edge of a deep crevice in which a stream flows swiftly by. Crude steps have been cut into the clay bank, allowing travelers to climb down to the

stream. You spy some flat stones in the water, apparently used as a crossing by pedestrians.

As you are plotting a course to take, a wondrous sight appears in the river. Rising from the deep is a white horse, water flowing from its long mane. With a light jump it lands on the riverside near you. The horse wears a saddle and bridle. It waits patiently for you to approach.

If the PCs throw missiles at the horse or refuse to go near it for half an hour, it turns into a dragonfly and buzzes off. Should the PCs climb down the crevice and approach, it allows someone to mount.

The horse is Fachna the phouka, a magical beast given to trickery and practical jokes. Fachna has taken this form often before in an attempt to trick travelers coming and going along the track. The wereboar family at area 5 know of his tricks and do their best to catch him and give the monster a good hiding (their tempers are not the coolest in the world). Fachna knows the wizard's cottage is farther up the trail. He has tried unsuccessfully to enter the cottage to play tricks.

Fachna's conversation in humanoid form is disjointed and punctuated by loud guffaws or shrill giggles. His entire existence is to play jokes, and he has trouble concentrating on serious subjects like giving PCs directions.

Fachna hopes one of the travelers will think his horse-shape is some kind of magical ferry by which they can cross the stream. (They may otherwise use the stepping stones with ease). If someone climbs on Fachna's back, the phouka immediately leaps headlong into the river, turning into a giant otter (with saddle and bridle) and careering off with his hapless rider upstream. Apart from a severe wetting, the rider is unharmed and can escape when the phouka turns into an eel and scoots off into the murky depths. Fachna may also turn into eel form if threatened with attack. He appears later at a safe distance in donkey form—braying a laugh at the victim he has fooled so well. Fachna plagues the PCs with practical jokes if he can. They may encounter him again if they seem particularly annoyed and he is still at large.

The phouka is motivated by its sense of humor rather than any desire to do harm or cause trouble—it loves mischief but does not intentionally cause injury. Local people often blame the phouka when smoke doesn't rise in a chimney, or if a downdraft causes smoke to enter the room. Sometimes it is the phouka's doing; other times it's just the weather.

Fachna (phouka): INT average; AL CN; AC varies; MV varies; HD varies; THAC0 varies; #AT varies; Dmg varies; SA turn self into any monster; SD turn self into any monster; SZ varies; ML unsteady (7); XP special (If slain, work out current HD based on form and adjust as per Table 32, *DMG*/47; *HR3*/51.

8. The Salmon Leap. If adventurers follow the river downstream from the ford, perhaps searching for another crossing place, they find a short waterfall known as the Salmon Leap. A number of cave bears are busy grabbing large fish out of the water. The bears come here annually to partake of the glut of food. Their natural aggression is compounded by territoriality—anyone straying too near them is attacked.

Cave Bears (4): INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 41, 34 (–2), 33; THAC0 13; AT 3; Dmg 1–8/1–8/1–12; SA hug (On a paw hit of 18 or better, bear hugs for additional 2–16 hp damage); SZ H (12'+ tall); ML average (8–10); XP 650 each; *MM*/17.

Cave bears continue to fight for 1–4 melee rounds after reaching 0 to –8 hit points. At –9 or fewer hit points they are killed immediately.

9. Forest Trapper. At a fork in the path the PCs have the option of taking one route or another. If they continue on the right fork, they come to Ocras's cottage, ¾ of a mile further on. Should they take the left fork, the trail goes north into ever-deeper woodland.

A few hundred yards along the north path lives a forest trapper, hidden beneath the road with its twig-like barbs extended. Passers by have a 25% chance (75% chance if surprised) of unknowingly stepping on one. If not surprised, druids or rangers have a 5% chance per level of spotting and identifying the barbs. Victims must roll a successful save vs. poison or be paralyzed for 2d20 turns. A forest trapper does not surface until all movement stops. Then it attacks in the manner of a subterranean trapper, causing a –4 penalty on opponents' surprise and constricting for 1d6 hp damage per round. Suffocation occurs in 1d4+1 rounds regardless of the damage suffered by the victim. Prey only can fight with short weapons that were in hand when the monster attacked. The specimen has 1d20+5 poisonous barbs.

Forest Trapper: INT high; AL N; AC 4; MV 3, burrow 6; HD 10; hp 70; THAC0 11; AT see above; Dmg see above; SA see above; SZ H (20' diameter); ML 11; XP 3,000; *MM*/229.

There are 2,000 pp in a semi-digested saddlebag in a heap of trapper droppings, some yards west of the road.

10. Ocra's Cottage.

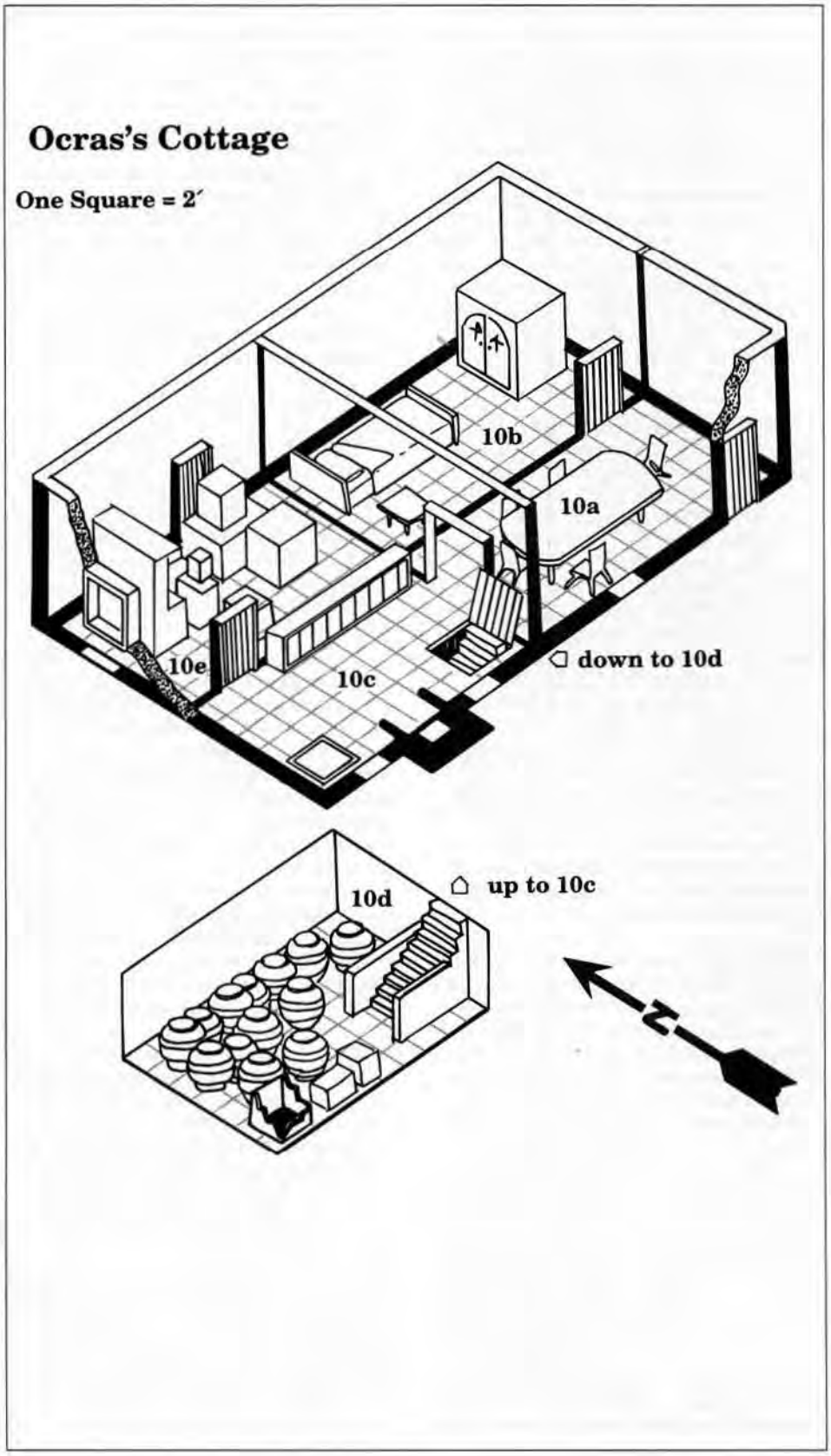
The forest path continues along a ridge to the northeast, disappearing into the distance beneath the trees. To the left is a small path which winds lazily down into a hollow. A few hundred yards long you make out a whitewashed cottage. It is quite big and well-made.

The cottage is indeed that of the wizard, though the DM should let the PCs guess this for themselves. Should the adventurers decide instead to follow the main track, they go deeper and deeper into wild parts, soon finding that the trail ends beneath the trees. Wandering monsters and the distinct lack of human activity should indicate they have come too far.

If the party descends to the cottage, they find it somewhat more advanced in design than the mud-and-wattle huts of Abhainn Órga. It's stone-built, for one thing, and its small cottage windows have panes of glass. A chimney-breast protrudes through the south wall, which also contains the only door.

The cottage radiates a strong aura of alteration magic, and the PCs find it nigh-on indestructible. No windows break or open from the outside, and the door is locked and as hard as flint. The thatch on the roof neither parts nor burns, and the chimney does not allow ingress. (Interior structures are also largely indestructible.)

The adventurers may use any magical means to enter the cottage (*teleportation, passwall* etc.) as it is not proof against these types of spells. A *knock* spell opens the door. Otherwise they may attempt to pick the lock or knock on the door and hope for a reply.



The door is enchanted such that a vision of any visitors standing before it is projected to any wall inside the mansion. Invisible creatures are not shown. Briocht can be in any part of the mansion and order the door to open without going near it in person. Should the characters enter the house invisibly or at a point other than the door, Briocht is curled up in area 11r, reading through Ocras's spellbooks. The dragon does not roam the mansion unless alerted to intruders.

The door has a saving throw of 4 or better versus all magical attacks, and it has 75 hp.

10a. Dining Room.

This chamber has an oaken table and six fine chairs about it. The remains of a meal eaten some days ago still lies on the table—plates, cups, two wine bottles, and two goblets. A candelabra in the center has burned out, leaving wax rivulets down the table.

To the west an archway leads into another room. A door in the north wall stands closed. There is a small-window in the south wall and another door leading out of the cottage.

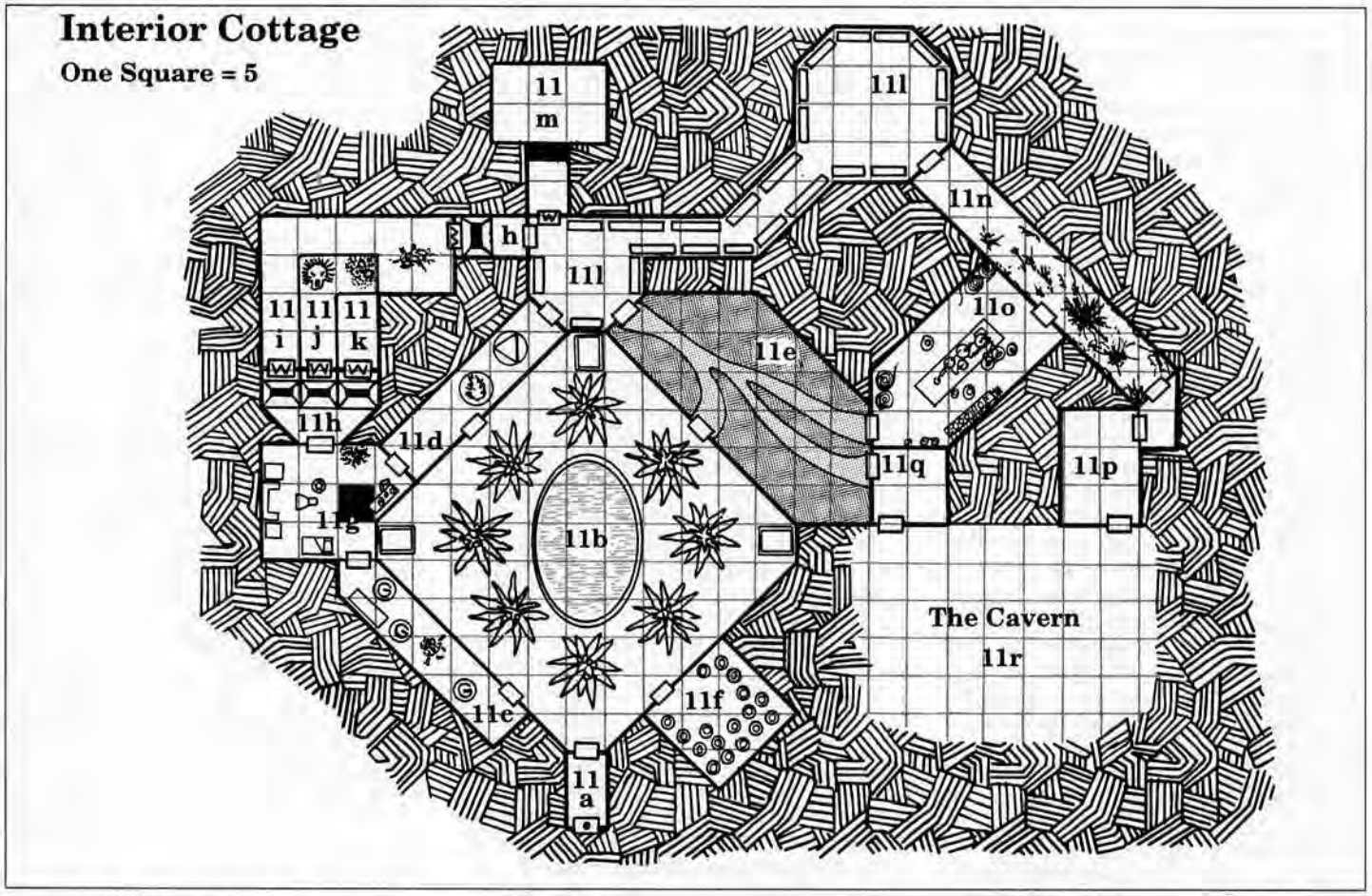
The PCs can see two places set at the table where Briocht and Ocras had their dinner on the wizard's last day. Leftovers suggest a meat dish was eaten by both diners. On the table, one wine bottle is empty while the second hasn't been opened. Like the candles, it was left while Ocras searched for the disguised Briocht.

10b. Bedroom

This chamber is a bedroom. Beside the neatly made bed is a small table strewn with books and scrolls. At its foot is a large baroque wardrobe, obviously an import to the region. There are no windows, a chandelier hangs above the middle of the room.

Apart from a cursory glance to ensure no enemy lurked here, Briocht hasn't bothered about the wizard's bedroom.

The only items of value to the adventurers may be found in the books and scrolls. The first is a part of Ocras's personal spellbooks, including: *charm*



monster, ice storm, solid fog; Leomund's lamentable belaborment, and *transmute mud to rock.*

The second, a book, holds notes written in Ocras's own hand. It details his recent work, including manufacturing a *wand of earth and stone* for one George Umfin, a dwarven resident outside the valley; a *ring of truth,* deliverable to an elf named Lelflinn living deep in the Ardan Woods; and a *helm of invulnerability* paid for by Magg O'Cilligh. The document is proof of the chieftain's duplicity, though PCs may not realize this. Instead it may serve to identify the nature of the magical item they are searching for.

The scrolls on the table are letters meant to be sent to contacts and friends. No mention of Briocht, Magg, or Ocras's latest projects is made in any of them.

10c. Kitchen.

The kitchen is comprised of a long cupboard with a worktop; a covered well; a fireplace hung with kitchen utensils; and a trap door through which descending stone steps can be seen. Windows look out each side of the chimney at the oak-wood.

Nothing unusual appears in the kitchen. There are the remains of a cooked meal in the pots and on the worktop. If characters examine the door in the north wall they find it locked. It may be unlocked by a thief at –25% chance on his Open Locks roll.

Briocht discovered this door locked too, but the key was still in it, so he turned it and entered the room beyond while Ocras was in the cellar.

10d. Cellar.

Steep stone steps descend to a cellar. The floor is 6' below the kitchen area. Five stone jars of liquor and three crates of straw are the only furnishings. Sticking out of the straw are some green bottles.

Ocras kept a modest wine cellar. While fetching another bottle of wine he inadvertently gave Briocht the opportunity to find the mansion.

The alcohol here may prove useful if adventurers are attacked by the retch plants in area 11b.

10e. Spare Room. The door between this room and the kitchen is firmly locked. The window in the west wall has been blocked from within by an old dresser. Note that there is no door in the exterior wall of the house, despite the one shown exiting from the room on the map.

This chamber is filled with old crates and boxes, obviously placed here in storage. A wooden dresser is placed across the window.

Behind the largest pile you see a glimmer: a door made of finely wrought silver stands closed in the north wall.

This is the entrance to Ocras's magical mansion. It opens on the utterance of the wizard's name, whether the one given him in Abhainn Órga or "Ulish," given him by his parents. Otherwise, nothing else short of a *limited wish* allows the PCs to enter.

11. The Magical Mansion. Note the change of scale on the maps of the mansion. The mansion exists in extra-dimensional space, all but area 11r being in the one space. Any extra-dimensional container (a *bag of holding*, for instance) carried into the mansion is 50% likely to be rendered harmlessly inert; 50% likely to rupture and lose all its contents. If inert while in the mansion, nothing can be removed from the container until it is removed to normal space, or to the Great Cavern (area 11r), whose special status means it exists in another space, compatible with the adventurers' own environment.

The mansion has several protective spells and monsters which are still operating despite Briocht's presence. Apart from these, the DM should note the description of *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* (*PHB*/185) especially as it pertains to hunger on leaving the mansion. This effect is likely to have led to Ocras's nickname—one must eat large quantities of food immediately on leaving such a mansion if one stays any appreciable amount of time there.

11a. Entrance Corridor.

The strange silvery door opens into a corridor which cannot be there—it stretches northward for 20′, ending at a door. As far as you are concerned, this should not be. You should be looking out into the oak wood at this point.

As you look along the corridor, you notice a ghostly male figure dressed in the livery of a servant shimmer into view.

The door, like all others unless noted otherwise, opens at a light push. The ghostly figure is an attendant who opens the door on command. It does not leave the corridor or communicate with the adventurers. Neither can it be harmed unless dispelled (vs. 14th level).

These mansion attendants must have a solid surface to walk on—they cannot levitate or fly. Some have jobs they interrupt only if directly ordered to by adventurers. They don't fight, nor can they carry objects heavier than two pounds.

The attendants may unnerve adventurers, but they are all harmless. On the other hand, the banshee, Ailish (area 11m), may be mistaken for a harmless flunky if the PCs meet her after being lulled by the harmlessness of the attendants.

None of the servants can leave the mansion without being destroyed in the process.

11b. Tropical Hall.

The dungeon door opens on a wondrous sight. Instead of a normal room, there is a great hall here, its ceiling a full 30′ above the floor. Great palm trees grow out of the very stone, about a long ornamental pool of sparkling water. Continual lights are dotted about the walls and ceiling, giving the impression of a balmy day in the tropics. Other doors are visible about the walls, while stone platforms can be seen in other corners.

Ghostly figures in servant livery (five male, five female) busy themselves dusting and sweeping. They do not seem to notice your party yet.

Doors lead out as indicated to adjoining rooms in the mansion. The three stone platforms—each little more than a 10′×8′×1′ high slab of stone affixed to the floor—are Ocras's way of getting around quickly. The westernmost slab *teleports* any living matter and any possessions carried to area 11l; the easternmost slab *teleports* to area 11r; while the northernmost slab is a trap. The latter *teleports* the unfortunate victim to area 11m, where he meets Ailish the Banshee.

There is no possibility of error in any *teleportation*, and up to three people and their equipment can be transported at a time. Non-living matter (including mansion attendants) cannot be transported unless carried by a living being.

The "palm trees" are retch plants, planted here to defend against possible intruders. A PC is entirely safe when walking a narrow line and staying close to the walls. If a PC passes beneath a tree, however, there's a 20% chance that one of its fleshy globes drops; if a solid contact is made against the tree, 1d4+1 of the noisesome fruits drop down.

The DM should randomly determine the target attacked if a group is beneath the tree. Targets are treated as AC 10 versus the attack. When globes strike, they burst, splashing a nauseating fluid in a 5′ radius. Those 5–9′ away have a 25% chance (each) of being splashed. The fluid causes creatures to vomit for the next three rounds; in addition, victims are at half normal Strength for one hour. No saving throw is allowed.

The odor can be removed by washing in alcohol. Otherwise it is discernible within a 50′ radius, and persists for 1d4 hours. (Alcohol, or a substitute, can be found in areas 10a, 10c, and 11f).

Retch plants (4): INT non-; AL N; AC 8; MV 0; HD 8; hp 50 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1 or 1d4+1; Dmg 0; SA smelly fruit; SD as above; SZ H (20′ tall); ML 9; XP 975 each; *MM*/291.

PCs who mistakenly believe the pool is a good place to wash are attacked by the dozen water leapers Ocras has bred here. The pool is under a *stasis* spell such that the leapers remain asleep until the water is touched or an object is thrown in. The mansion attendants are invisible to the monsters.

Water leapers (12): INT semi-; AL N (E); AC 8; MV swim 12; HD 1–1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4; SA shriek, leap; SZ S (3′ long); ML 9; XP 65 each; *HR3*/53.

Water leapers look like large toads with fishlike tails instead of back legs, and a pair of flying-fish fin-wings instead of front legs. Their mouths are full of very sharp teeth, and they can jump out of the water and glide up to 30′. If they miss on such an attack, they must struggle back to the water (MV 1) to try again.

Water leapers attack with their teeth. Up to 12 can attack a single human at the same time. They emit a piercing shriek, which startles victims (save vs. spells or be unable to act for

one round), as they leap at a target. (A water leaper that shrieks cannot take another action in the same round). If hit, a target must make a Dexterity check or fall down. He has a +3 initiative modifier for the next round and a penalty of +4 on his Armor Class versus any attacks while he is prone. (Modifiers cannot reduce AC beyond AC 10 in any event).

The attendants move out of the way of PCs and open doors if so ordered. They cannot open a locked door do not leave the Tropical Hall.

11c. Golem Laboratory.

This long chamber is fitted as a laboratory. Pieces of stone lie here and there, seemingly where they were chipped away from larger blocks. Three stone statues of humanoid figures stand motionless in random positions on the floor. The broken remains of a fourth lies where it fell in the middle of the room.

Briocht had to resort to violence when the stone guardians attacked him. The broken guardian is the result of this combat. The magical constructs animate in the round an intruder crosses the threshold and close to attack one round later.

There is a 20% chance any animating stone guardian goes berserk in the round it comes alive. If so, it attacks everything moving (including other guardians) until destroyed.

Lying open on a worktable near the north door is a *manual of stone golems*. Ocras was practicing his skill making guardians before attempting the one-shot magical effect contained in the manual. The magical book is intended for a wizard only. If a priest reads it, he loses 10,000–60,000 XP. Any other non-wizard character suffers 6d6 hp damage from opening the work. A thief can determine the nature of this trap if he makes a successful Find Traps roll on examining the closed book. However, the effect is integral to the *manual*, so the baneful effect cannot be removed, even at half a thief's normal chance.

For more information, see *DMG*/174.

Stone guardians (3): INT non-; AL N; AC 2; MV 9; HD 4+4; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2–9/2–9; SD ¼ damage from edged weapons; ½ damage from cold, fire, electricity; immunity to normal missiles, *charms*, *holds*, poisons, and mind-affecting spells; SZ M to L (6′ to 8′ tall); ML 20; XP 420 each; *MM*/171.

11d. Summoning Room.

This chamber is lit with flickering light. It is long and otherwise dark. On the floor are two carefully drawn circles filled with strange sigils and symbols. Standing in the southernmost circle is a towering column of flame, moving about with an angry air.

A captive fire elemental is confined to the circle. The circle is an invention of Ocras, and it increases the power of a *conjure elemental* spell such that the monster must remain in the circle until given its instructions by the original summoner, until the circle is broken, or until another wizard wrests control of the elemental from the original summoner.

Unless the PCs enter the circle or break it by rubbing part of it out, they are safe from the monster. If released, it tries to destroy the person it perceives as having released it (a surrogate summoner, as far as the monster is concerned) before exiting to the elemental plane of Fire.

Should the monster be released, PCs standing in the other circle (a circle of protection from evil) are perfectly safe, if somewhat limited in their movements. If the monster is reduced to zero or fewer hit points, it is dispelled.

A wizard character trying to control the elemental must first cast *dispel magic* against the confining circle it presently occupies. This is tested against the 14th level of magic use. For more details, see *MM*/98 and *PHB*/148.

Fire elemental: INT low; AL N; AC2; MV 12; HD 12; hp 80; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 3–24 (3d8); SA burn combustible materials (save vs. magical fire at –2 or burn); SD +2 or better weapon to hit; immune to fire-based attacks; SZ H (12′ tall); ML 15; XP 6,000; *MM*/100.

11e. The Glass Bridge.

The door opens not into a chamber, but a great bottomless pit spanned by an arching bridge of green glass. Looking down you see clouds far below. An occasional gust of wind blows up from the depths, bringing with it a drizzle of rain.

The adventurers are looking into a portion of the elemental plane of Air. Whether it is a projection or an actual gateway to the plane is up to the DM. If it is a gateway, he may wish to prepare an adventure for the PCs to follow there. If it is a projection onto that plane, it rests over a not-so-bottomless pit, 75′ deep. PCs who fall in suffer 20d6 hp damage.

The bridge is made of *glassteel* and is fabulously thin and brittle. A single blow causing 30 hp damage or more fractures the bridge. Any characters on it at that time must save vs. paralysis to run to the nearest exit before another blow smashes it completely. (Any damage after the first blow destroys the bridge).

If the DM decides the view below is the actual plane of air, he should check a 15% chance per crossing of the appearance of an invisible stalker in Ocras's extradimensional mansion. There is no reason to assume it is automatically hostile, and the stalker may even be befriended by the adventurers if they become aware of it and make overtures of friendship.

Invisible stalker: INT high; AL N; AC 3; MV 12, fly 12 (A); HD 8; hp 37; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 4–16 (4d4); SA surprise (–6 surprise penalty to opponents unable to detect *invisible* foes); SD *invisibility* (–2 on opponents' attack rolls if unable to see invisible creatures); MR 30%; SZ L (8′ tall); ML 13; XP 3,000; *MM*/208.

11f. Liquid Storage.

A large, square room here is filled with stone, ceramic, and glass jars, all standing on the floor. There are 17 such containers, and runes and letters on paper labels attached to them name the contents of each.

A single transparent humanoid figure stands motionless in the center of the floor.

Ocras stored various liquids in here, often used in his research, experiments, or everyday work. The PCs may find a use for some, if not all of them. (The DM should refer to Table 29 in the *DMG* in case PCs begin using the containers as missiles, etc.) If ordered, the mansion attendants carry one container to any point between areas 11a and 11p, inclusive.

Going clockwise about the room, jars 1 and 2, made of glass, each contain a

gallon of liquid soap. If used to soap a floor, treat the area as if affected by a *grease* spell. Each jar affects one 10′ × 10′ square area. Water in sufficient quantities neutralizes the effect. Each glass jar has a save of 14 or higher to avoid breaking if it is dropped.

Jars 3–5, are made of stone and hold acid, useful in cleaning metal, or in etching. If used as a weapon, a jar of acid causes more than the normal 2–8 (vialful) hp damage. If an entire jar hits a victim, it inflicts 10–40 hp damage which cannot be regenerated and must be healed normally. To avoid breaking in a fall, each stone jar has a save of 8 or higher.

Items 6 and 7 are copper cylinders, and stand about a foot high. Inside is mercury, a liquid metal. It expands and contracts as heat or cold are applied and Ocras was wondering whether it could be used to read temperatures in some device or other, as yet not invented. The metal is poisonous by contact (type L), injection (type C), or ingestion (type G). (See Table 51, *DMG.*)

Each copper cylinder has a save of 3 or better to avoid breakage if knocked over. If spilled, mercury can be safely collected using a magnet.

Vessels 8–11 are ceramic jars containing white spirits. The liquid can be used to thin paint, to fuel a fire, or to wash off the smell of the retch-plant fruits (area 11b, above). Used as a grenade-like missile, a jar of this liquid has a saving throw of 11 or higher to avoid breaking and, if lit, burns for 3 rounds, inflicting 3d6 hp damage the first round, 2d6 hp damage the second, and 1d6 hp in the third.

Containers 12–15 are glass (save of 14 or higher if dropped) and contain iodine solution. Applied to a wound as a sterilizer, the iodine heals 1 hp extra per day of rest.

The last two jars (16 and 17) are also made of glass and are stoppered with a water-filled air lock from which the odd bubble rises. These are fermentation experiments belonging to the wizard, and each holds a quantity of beer. Neither has finished working yet, so they are undrinkable. One also has been infested with a colony of yellow mold, which, under pressure in the container, is in danger of exploding in a 10′-diameter spread if the container is handled roughly. (Save on 14 or higher to avoid breakage). Those who look carefully through the bell-shaped jar notice the mold growing atop the scum floating on the liquid.

Yellow mold: INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD N/A; hp N/A; THAC0 N/A; #AT 1; Dmg N/A; SA poison spores (creatures caught in cloud of spores must save vs. poison or die); SD affected only by fire; MR 20%; SZ S (2′ diameter); ML N/A; XP 65; *MM*/255.

11g. The Forge. The doors to this chamber are lined with lead foil, visible to the PCs from the outside.

> The chamber here is painted red. A large forge fire is built against the west wall, charcoal cinders filling the grate. Left and right of this are fuel bins. In the center of the room is a heavy anvil, delicate tools as well as heavy hammers ranged about it. A keg of water stands nearby.
>
> Old cinders are heaped between two doors near the north wall. An unkempt bed rests near the south wall, while a small table with jars of food and water completes the furnishings.

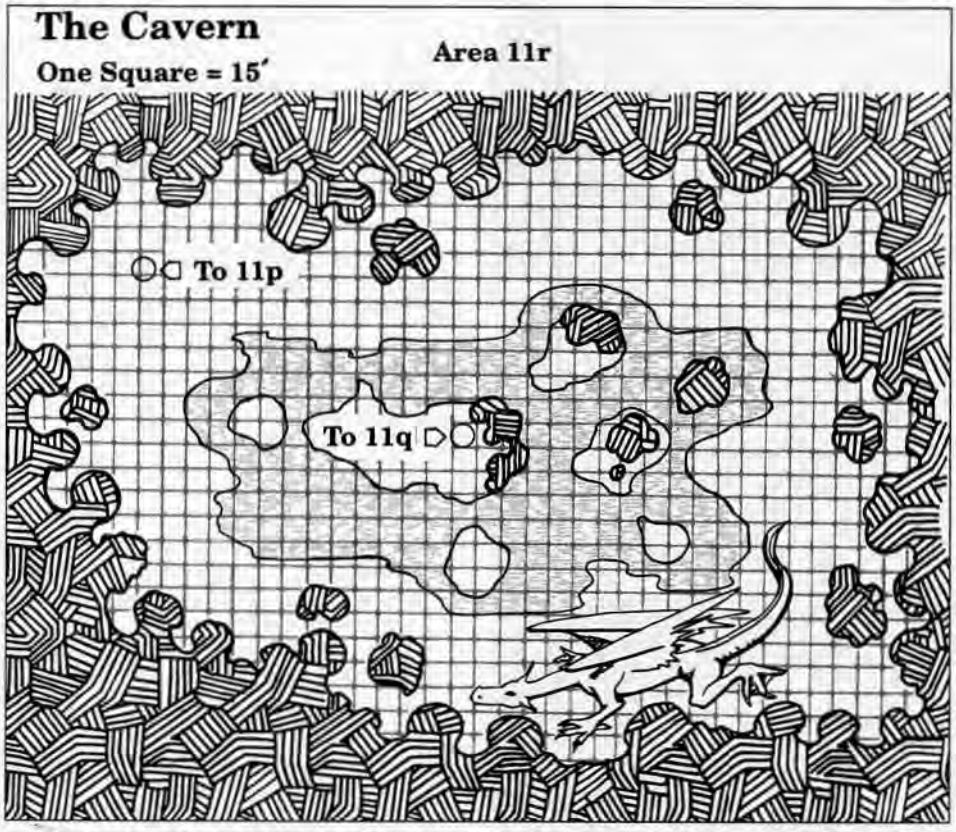
This is where Ocras created the *helm of invulnerability.* The bed and provisions are for the lengthy stay the wizard was obliged to take in the chamber, never being able to leave the item while it was being enchanted. He would also avoid ordering an attendant in here for fear of ruining an enchantment.

PCs investigating the room find scraps of metal on the floor about the anvil. They are pieces of silver and fine steel left over from the manufacture of the *helm*. The tools used in the process are worth 750 gp. The waste is worth perhaps 100 sp.

11h. Vault Doors. Note that there are two entrances to the vaults, each marked as area 11h. The description of each varies slightly, but basically both places are small areas with open pit obstacles between the entrance and the doors to the vaults (11i, 11j, and 11k). In the pits are poisonous snakes. The pits are 20′ deep, so anyone falling suffers 2d6 hp damage.

The vault doors themselves are *wizard locked* at the 14th level.

Poisonous snakes (19 per pit): INT animal; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (–2 modifier on save; onset time 1–4



rounds; save or be incapacitated for 1–12 days); SZ S (5′ long); ML average (8); XP 175 each; *MM*/320.

11i. False Vault. This door is *wizard locked*. The largest of the vaults is false, designed to mislead anyone likely to wish to steal from the wizard. He keeps Ruairi, his pet rust monster, in here. It hasn't been fed for days, so the monster happily attacks any metal armor, weapons, or possessions belonging to adventurers who hazard an exploration of this area.

If a bridge can be made for an attendant to cross, it can carry metal provisions for Ruairi and keep him occupied while the PCs explore.

Rust monster: INT animal; AL N; AC 2; MV 18; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg Nil; SA rust metal (ferrous metals by preference; magical items have a chance of being unaffected equal to 10% per magical plus); SZ M (5′ long); ML 9; XP 270; *MM*/305.

11j. Money Storage. The entrance is *wizard locked*. If someone opens the door to this room, a shrieker begins wailing. If Briocht is in the mansion (except area 11r), he immediately realizes there are intruders about and behaves accordingly.

Around the bend in the L-shaped room is a large bin of carelessly piled money. In all there are 6,500 gp, 12,000 sp, and 19,000 cp. If PCs are too lazy, five ghostly attendants are required to shift this money about the mansion.

Shrieker: INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 0; SD noise; SZ M (6′ Tall); ML 12); XP 120; *MM*/120.

11k. Workshop Vault. Ocras kept his completed magical items here. Just prior to his death, his only commission was from Magg. If the PCs bypass the *wizard lock*, they see the following.

> The door opens into a bare room, save for a wooden pole on which a fabulous gleaming helmet rests. The helmet is polished and decorated with many Celtic motifs. Spiral forms of animals merge in wonderful profusion. Whoever created this must have made it for a king.

The *helm of invulnerability* gives the wearer complete invulnerability against certain types of attacks, but is rendered no more than normal headgear if an O'Cilligh is the attacker.

The *helm* protects fully against melee attacks, normal missile attacks, magical missiles, and any spells or spell-like effects delivered by touch (whether beneficial or baneful); fiery breath weapons; magical fire; acid attacks; non-magical fire attacks; and anything which damages the skin or body by burrowing or driving through the surface.

The *helm* doesn't protect against: ingested poisons or parasites; inhaled poisons (including smoke, vapors, gassy breath weapons, or spores); drowning or suffocation; area-effect spells which do no damage to the victim; charm, holds, or mind-affecting spells, or any attack suffered when the helm is not worn.

The magical item is worth 10,000 gp. If a PC spellcaster duplicates it, he should be awarded a like number of experience points.

11l. The Great Library.

> The room here is lined with shelves, each one filled with books, tomes, and scrolls. The books continue out the adjoining corridor and off into the distance.
>
> Two ghostly attendants stand near the center of the library.

The *teleportation* slab in the west corner of area 11b brings PCs and their possessions to this area.

Ocras's library is extensive. The DM can place any written material important to a future adventure in here, if he wishes. Otherwise, he can randomly determine what types of books or scrolls are found using 1d20 and the Library Sidebar. It should take a matter of weeks to find 50% of the items mentioned—months to catalog the lot. The attendants fetch and carry, but they do not recognize books by title or magical content.

Note that in many cases on the Library Sidebar, precise spells, where applicable, are not given. These are for the DM to detail before play to avoid unnecessary duplication or overbalance in his campaign.

In the north wall of the southwestern arm of the library stands a leaden door, *wizard locked* and tied with wire. Briocht has not entered the corridor beyond yet. If adventurers insist on using this door, see area 11m, for details of what they encounter.

11m. The Sealed Room. The corridor leading to this room has been

Library

Roll 1d20	Item Found
1	Formula for the creation of *oil of timelessness.*
2	A wizard scroll with one 6th-level spell.
3	Instructions for the manufacture of a *wand of metal and mineral detection.*
4	A *scroll of protection from undead.*
5	A partially burned spellbook, with three spells in the level range 1–4.
6	A treatise entitled, *Watching the Watchers,* which, after two weeks study, allows a wizard learn a *gaze reflection* spell.
7	A fragile book of rambling text on interplanar travel (most of it erroneous) infested with a bookworm. **Bookworm:** AC 2; MV 12, burrow 3; HD 1/4; hp 2; THAC0 Nil; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SD camouflage (–6 on opponents' surprise rolls); SZ T (1' long); ML unreliable; XP 15; *MM*/364.
8	An unreadable book almost entirely destroyed by the bookworm.
9	A book on spiders from which a *web* spell may be constructed.
10	A text on magical theory from which three 1st-level spells can be devised.
11	A clerical scroll with the spell *stone shape*
12	A book entitled *Ringing the Changes,* allowing the reader, after a week's study, to reproduce one of the *polymorph* spells at DM's choice.
13	Three 2nd-level spells, two 3rd-level spells, and two 4th-level spells.
14	A book on illusions allowing the reader to learn three illusion spells.
15	A book about extra-planar spaces, which, with 5,000 gp worth of materials, allows a spellcaster create a *bag of holding.*
16	A book about dragons which allows the reader create a *scroll of protection vs. red dragons.*
17	The magical (but not financial) components to create a magical ring of the DM's choice.
18	The theory behind the making of one magical staff of the DM's choice.
19	A *scroll of invisibility, 10' radius.*
20	A scroll with the spell *rainbow pattern.*

sealed with a *wall of stone* spell, making a barrier some 4' thick. No sounds can be heard beyond the blockage.

PCs taking the northern *teleportation* device in area 11b find themselves in the chamber beyond the barrier. If someone successfully *dispels* or *disintegrates* the wall, they can enter the room beyond, which is a special magical container capable of imprisoning non-corporeal monsters. It is the prison of Ailish, a Banshee Ocras captured some years ago. At first glance, the PCs may believe the figure is just one more attendant.

Once the *wall of stone* is removed the banshee can move out of her prison. Her first priority is to escape the mansion and take up residence again in the woods where the adventurers may again hear of her. This plan may be modified by a desire to slay all living beings in the mansion first (including the adventurers) at the DM's option. She certainly tries to kill someone transported to her prison if the cell is not opened.

Banshee: INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA death wail (usable only at night; all within 30' must save vs death magic or die); SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 50%; SZ M (5'-6' tall); ML 13; XP 4,000; *MM*/13.

Holy water causes 2d4 hp damage per vialful against a banshee. A *dispel magic* slays one. A banshee is turned as a special undead.

11n. Shooting Gallery.

This chamber is a long narrow gallery, the walls and floor blackened and cracked as if some mighty battle has been played out here. Impact marks and blast craters cluster mostly in the southernmost portion of the hall.

This was used by Briocht to practice spells like *lightning bolt, fireball,* and other effects he may have discovered from research in the library (area 11l); it wasn't the site of a battle. The floors and walls are damaged but otherwise safe to walk along.

11o. Chemistry Laboratory.

This large hall is outfitted with alchemical equipment in the form of glassware, retorts, and miles of glass and copper tubing. Large glass vessels stand on the floor around a long table of equipment, some of it still working.

The equipment on the table is manufacturing potions of *healing.* In the vessel gathering the finished product (collecting, one drip at a time) is sufficient for eight potions. Potion vials and stoppers are easily found in the well-stocked laboratory.

11p. Cloakroom.

The chamber here is furnished only with wooden pegs fitted into the wall at human head height. A single heavy cloak hangs on a peg nearest the southern door. Hovering nearby is a transparent humanoid.

The cloak is a *cloak of warmth,* designed to protect the wizard from the occasional cold spells in the Great Cavern (area 11r, following). The *cloak* operates as a *ring of warmth* when worn (*DMG*/150). The attendant fetches the cloak if ordered.

11q. Empty Chamber.

The chamber here appears entirely empty. On close examination, a small iron hook screwed into the wall near the southern door is the only feature in an otherwise bare room.

Ocras's staff hung on the hook. Briocht took it when he passed through the door from 11q to 11r, below.

11r. The Great Cavern. The easternmost *teleportation* device from area 11b brings PCs into a random position on the floor of this cavern.

Extra-dimensional devices previously rendered inert in other parts of the mansion work normally again when carried into this area.

Note the arrangement of doors in this magical cavern. The door from 11q comes out on the center island; the door from 11p comes out in the west end of the cavern floor.

If the PCs use 11p to enter, read the first boxed description below. If they

enter from llq, read the second boxed description.

Coming from Area 11p

> The southern door from the cloakroom opens into a wide hall, apparently empty. On stepping across the threshold however, a magical change comes over the room. Instead of standing in a part of Ocras's mansion, you discover yourselves on the floor of a vast enclosed cavern, the door standing near one wall. Looking back, you see the cloakroom through the door. Looking around the new cavern, you see a large pond or lake with some rocky islands. A cold breeze ruffles your hair as you stand gaping at the cavern.

A person can return from south to north through the door, returning to area 11p with ease. From the north side, running through the apparently empty door frame has no magical effect, and a person stays in the cavern.

Coming from 11q

> The door from the empty chamber opens into another empty hall. As you step through however, a strange change overtakes the room. Instead of a chamber of Ocras's mansion, you see a huge cavern, and an island on which the door frame now rests in the middle of a wide pond or lake. Looking back, you see the empty chamber you've just left. A chill breeze cuts you to the bone.

This is where Briocht has ended up, brooding in the extra-dimensional cave—so like his old lair in the Ardan Woods.

The cave is given to occasional extremes of heat or cold, but only prolonged exposure can cause damage. Humans and their ilk suffer 1d4 hp damage per day of exposure in the cavern, while the dragon is unaffected. It depends on how the PCs came here and whether they encounter Briocht in human or dragon form (see below).

In the Great Cavern Briocht has stockpiled some of the choicer items belonging to Ocras. Among these is his *staff of wizardry*, a *staff* with similar powers to a *ring* of this type (see *DMG*/151). It has the ability to double the amount of 5th-level spells a wizard may learn in one day. This function uses one charge, and the *staff* must be held before the wizard studies his spellbooks to release the power which drains one charge. The *staff* has 16 charges remaining, and it cannot be recharged. Briocht has used it to double up his spells to include eight 5th-level spells instead of his usual four.

The wizard's spellbooks have also been added to the monster's hoard. These are quite extensive, and should be considered by the DM before he introduces them to the player characters in case they are too powerful.

The books hold the following spells: *audible glamer, burning hands, change self, charm person, feather fall, grease, identify, jump, magic missile, phantasmal force, sleep; alter self, continual light, detect evil, fog cloud, improved phantasmal force, irritation, Leomund's trap, levitate, magic mouth, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, scare, spectral cloud, web, wizard lock; blink, dispel magic, haste, Leomund's tiny hut, sepia snake sigil, spectral force, vampiric touch; wizard eye; animate dead, cloudkill, false vision; enchant an item; geas, legend lore, transmute water to dust; banishment; limited wish.*

Another of Ocras's spellbooks can be found at area 10b, above.

Briocht

If the dragon has been given advance warning of the PCs arrival, he may introduce himself in the guise of Ocras using the power of his *ring of polymorph self* to fool them. If he is not aware of their presence in the mansion, (not likely if they knock, for a projection of whoever comes to the cottage door appears on a wall of the mansion) he is in dragon form when they first enter the Great Cavern.

Briocht is wily and can use his magical *ring* to beguile the PCs into believing he is relatively harmless. He is curious about the magical arts, even over treasure items, and so has kept to himself while reading the wizard's library and spellbooks.

His main concern is to keep his presence in the woods secret for as long as possible, as he hopes one day to be able to rule the lands and people living in the valley outside the wood. If he can pass himself off as Ocras, he tries to do so, but the DM should allow him to make a few mistakes the PCs might be able to pick up on to reveal him as an imposter. He does not know about the magical *helm*, which is a problem if the PCs ask why Ocras hasn't bothered to deliver it to Magg O'Cilligh. Neither is he fully aware of how exactly the magical mansion was constructed.

Once Briocht knows the *helm* is in the mansion, he is tempted to keep it. His dragon greed prevents him from simply giving the PCs the okay to take the *helm* with them, which would thereby maintain the secret of his presence. He wants it for himself.

If possible, the dragon *polymorphs* to human form before any dealings with the PCs, in case someone should escape to tell the outside world a dragon is nearby. Meanwhile, he is able to move through all areas of the mansion, the cottage, and the woods, so fleeing adventurers can be pursued. PCs may have the additional problem of hunger induced by a prolonged stay in the magical mansion if they eat only the food found there.

In *polymorphed* form, Briocht retains all his own hit points but cannot use his breath weapon, fly, or otherwise engage in non-magical activity not common to humankind. He can still cast spells, but all dragon powers are lost. He still has spell-like powers (*water breathing, suggestion, warp wood,* and *plant growth*—see below for frequency). Attacks are with fists only, but he still does 1d8+8/1d8+8 per hit, and THAC0 and AC remain the same. Briocht can return to dragon form at will, healing 1d12 hp damage (if applicable) on doing so.

Briocht (old green dragon): INT very; AL LE; AC –4; MV 9, fly 30 (C), swim 9; HD 17; hp 74; THAC0 3; AT 3 + special; Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8/2d10+8; SA breath weapon (cloud of poisonous gas 50′ long × 40′ wide × 30′ high; Damage 16d6+8/half); snatch (two victims, max); plummet (drop from at least 30′ onto eight or fewer victims); save vs. petrification or stay pinned, suffering damage each round equal to bite); kick (victims suffer 1d8+8 per kick and must roll Dex or under on d20 or be kicked back 1d6+8 feet; those kicked back must save vs. petrification at –8 penalty or fall over); wing buffet (as claw attack; roll Dex or less on d20 or be knocked prone); tail slap (slap up to 8 victims; damage 2d8+16; save vs. petrification at –8 penalty or be stunned for 1d4+1 minutes); stall (in wooded area stalling

Continued on page 37

JANX'S JINX

BY KENT ERTMAN

Bad dog!

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

Kent writes: I am 24 years old and a chemical engineer. I'd like to dedicate "Janx's Jinx" to my mom for her support, which has kept me going through the low times.

"Janx's Jinx" is an AD&D® adventure for a party of 3–5 PCs of levels 1–2 (about six total levels). The party should consist of a mix of classes, and there must be a good aligned cleric. The PCs can be any alignment, but it will be a much more heroic event if they are primarily good.

The adventure takes place in the small farming community of Davyd's Rest in the Dovedale district, about a day's travel northwest of Ashbourne. Ashbourne and Dovedale were first introduced in the adventure "Dovedale" in issue #46 of DUNGEON® Adventures. Though set in the same area, this adventure does not depend on the first one.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players to start the adventure:

> The Dovedale district is a unique and beautiful place named for the narrow wooded valley which is the source of the Dovedale river. The waterway meanders from the dale and through the foothills, providing water to the multitude of farming communities dotting the area. Most of the villages are tiny places which sprang up to provide services to the neighboring farms.
>
> Davyd's Rest is an unexciting place on the northwest side of the Dalewold Forest. One does not normally go to Davyd's Rest seeking adventure, and your party simply wants to pass through and spend the night resting and relaxing before continuing on to more exotic lands.

Unfortunately, the party may not get the rest they expected. The local cattle are suffering from an outbreak of foaming mouth disease, and the villagers are agitated in the extreme. The ailment has a high survival rate among domestic animals, it is not passed on to humans, and it usually lasts only a few weeks before dying out. The villagers are more concerned about the carriers of the disease: wolves.

Wolves always seem to die from foaming mouth disease, though the process can take days. In the meantime the wolves are aggressive, hostile, and extremely wild. The farmers fear that a pack of crazed, infected wolves may be prowling about the forests nearby and they are terrified for their safety.

For the Dungeon Master

The farmers are right. A large pack of wolves roves nearby, but their presence is only part of the threat to the village. A week ago, an elf warrior named Shyleen rode through Dovedale on his steed Janx (Janx is a blink dog). While camping for the night, the two were attacked by the diseased wolves, and Janx was wounded.

Within two days, Janx succumbed to the mind-numbing effects of foaming mouth disease. He attacked Shyleen, fled into the forest, and now runs with the wolves. Shyleen is desperate to recover Janx and he has been tracking the wolf pack ever since.

Davyd's Rest

The party first arrives in Davyd's Rest early in the morning. This gives them plenty of opportunity to meet the villagers and explore the area before nightfall. The paranoia of the villagers is obvious, as they are very nervous about the threat of the wolves. Ross, the innkeeper of Ye Olde Tavern and Marie Dumont entreat the PCs to help defend them until the threat passes. They explain that the foaming mouth disease must be near its end, and soon all of the wolves will be dead. They are correct, and if asked, most of the villagers agree.

Good-aligned PCs may feel honorbound to help. If the party demands compensation for their services, Marie says she might be able to convince the farmer's cooperative to offer a small reward (payable upon delivery of course). Ross offers rooms at his inn for half price if the PCs will help.

The town of Davyd's Rest is tiny, with only four buildings. There are many farms in the surrounding areas, but only three are close enough to be of any importance. The entire town is surrounded by the Mystic Forest.

1. Ye Olde Tavern. This is the town's only drinking establishment, and it is busy all day. The tavern is a ordinary stone building with an equally plain interior. The common room has five long tables, stools to seat 30, and a large fireplace. There are four rooms to rent at the going rate, and they are simply furnished but impeccably clean. PCs staying here always rest comfortably and eat well.

The innkeeper is Ross, a hardy middle-aged man who runs the place with the help of his wife Bess and daughter Tracy (all are 0-level humans). Ross maintains a good supply of fine ale, including the most popular brew *Hal's Old Singular*, from the famous Inn on the Peak at Ashbourne. Hal is Ross' friend, and any PC who speaks kindly of Hal gets a free mug of beer.

Ross can help the party meet the locals by introducing them as they come into the Tavern. One of the constant regulars in the tavern is Matt. He owns one of the more distant cattle farms and is in the village for only one day (the day the PCs arrive) before returning home. He knows rumor 14 and tells his point of view to anyone willing to listen.

2. Blacksmith's. Gaerfeld the blacksmith is a tough, tanned human who earns his living making and repairing farm equipment and shoeing cattle. He is a gruff and unfriendly person, but he shows a liking to attractive women.

He does not stock weapons or armor, nor does he care to make them, even though he is a superb smith. Any PC with appropriate non-weapon proficiencies can tell immediately that his work is of excellent quality. A PC could convince him to change his mind with a successful Charisma check rolled on 4d6. This roll is modified as follows:

–5 for male PCs
+1 for every 10 gp above market value he is offered
+2 if the PCs buy him some *Old Singular* at the Tavern
+5 if a female PC buys him some *Old Singular* at the Tavern

Any weapon Gaerfeld makes is of masterful craftsmanship, and there is a 50% chance it will be +1 to hit. Any armor he makes will not rust, break, or wear down before its time.

Gaerfeld: AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 16; THAC0 19 (18); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; ML 12; leather armor, exceptional *long sword +1*, dagger, short sword.

3. General Store. Prenilla is a motherly old woman who runs the store alone. She stocks mostly food items and leather goods for the farmers, but if the party requests exotic equipment there is a 20–25% chance that she may have some in stock. This includes unusual items, like holy water.

PCs find Prenilla incredibly resourceful at locating equipment. If she doesn't have what the party wants in her dizzying variety of stocked goods, she will get her hands on some within 1–14 days depending on the rarity of the item.

Special order items cost 3–10 times the price. But, if it's out there, Prenilla can find it.

4. Temple. The temple is a white stone building with a wooden bell tower. The townspeople are fairly relaxed in their practice of religion, so the priest, Brother Michael, does not schedule regular services. He is a quiet, young man with dark features who is devoted to Charisis, the goddess of healing and light.

Brother Michael is a wealth of facts, and he knows rumors 7 and 12 as well as four others (determined randomly). All of the rumors he tells are true. Brother Michael is a 0-level human, but he is a proficient healer and herbalist.

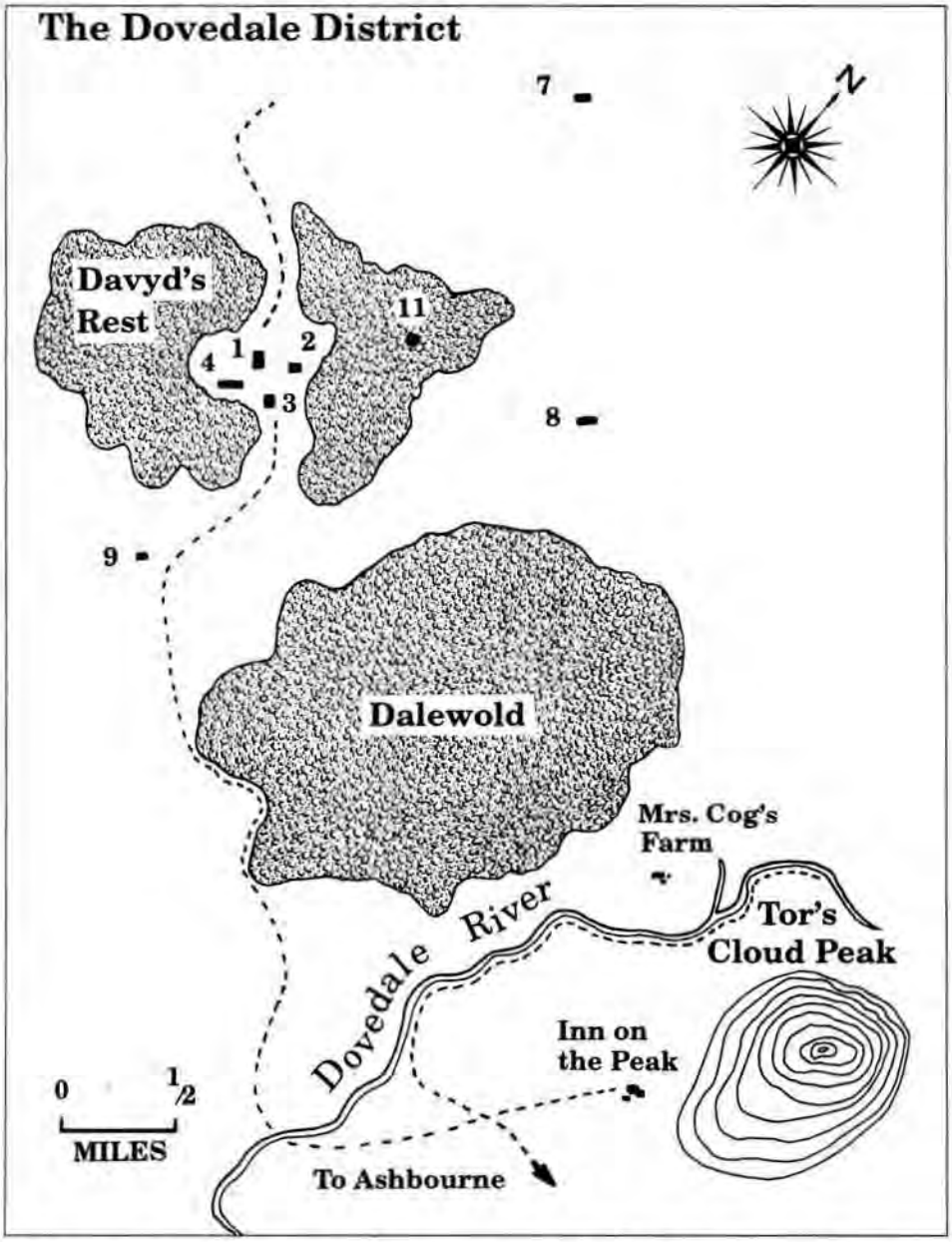
He knows little about the mysterious Father Davyd after whom the town is named. He has heard of the fabled Temple of Davyd from others in his order, but to his knowledge no one has ever seen it.

The Local Farms

There are three farms detailed here, and all are devoted to dairy and cattle. Generally, most of the land around the actual buildings is grazing land, fenced with sturdy posts and rails. This keeps the animals in and the wolves out. Each farm includes a house, 1–3 barns, a supply shed, and a bunkhouse for farm hands. These are all sizeable operations with many head of cattle.

All of the farmers are members of the cooperative organized by Mrs. Cog at Ashbourne. If the party successfully completed the "Dovedale" adventure in issue #46, they might already know these farmers.

7. Bruce Dreg's Farm. Bruce's farm is well maintained and expansive. His house is at the southernmost edge of



his property and is an impressive wooden structure. He is something of a woodsman and likes to explore the forest in his spare time. He is the only person alive who has seen the Temple of Davyd (rumor 17).

Bruce Dreg is also the only person for miles who sells horses. He charges the going rate, and he also sells saddles, saddle bags, harnesses, and so on. While most of his animals are good specimens, some are of below average quality. If the party buys a horse from Bruce, there is a 15% chance they will get such a beast. Bruce is not an evil person, but he has no qualms about selling less able horses.

8. Roger Waye's Farm. Roger is a very fat, jolly man who has made a good living for himself selling beef. He does little of the work himself except for finances. He is a hearty soul who thoroughly enjoys company, and he invites the PCs to dine with him. If they accept, they are treated to a superb feast of beef. Roger knows rumor 5.

9. Marie Dumont's Farm. Marie and Mrs. Cog (from issue #46) are the only female members of the farmer's cooperative, and they share a strange bond. They have a profound respect for one another and are fast friends, yet they are in fierce competition. If the PCs ever sample one of Mrs. Cog's pies, Marie immediately sits them down and makes them eat a few (or many!) of hers.

Marie is a good business person, but also something of a romantic who tends to believe fanciful stories. She knows rumors 4 and 16.

10. The Mystic Forest. Like Dalewold to the south, the trees here are a mix of maple, willow, oak, and elm, with gnarled spiny bushes growing on the ground. There are countless dirt paths through the forest.

Every turn, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the PCs encounter rabbits. They may run directly across the PCs' path, or simply rustle in the bushes out of sight. If the PCs set up camp in the forest, they hear constant rustling all night long as the rabbits check out the camp. The noise makes it extremely difficult for whomever is on guard to tell if there is actual danger or if it is simply the rabbits.

There is also a chance the party encounters wolves. During the day, there is a 1-in-6 chance the party encounters 1–4 wolves. Only one encounter occurs on any single day.

Wolves (14): INT low; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 9 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SZ S; ML 15; XP 120; *MM*/362.

The wolves are weak from the disease, but they are extremely vicious. As soon as one of them is killed, the others retreat into the forest.

At night, the wolves are more active. Every hour, roll 1d8. On a result of 1–4, the party hears the wolves howling in the distance. On a roll of 7–8, the howling is louder and much closer to the party. After 3 rounds, four to seven (1d4+3) wolves attack the party, and this time they retreat only after half their number are killed.

The PCs occasionally run across a dead wolf. From a distance it appears normal, but up close the PCs can see the effects of the disease. The eyes are swollen open and bloodshot, thick white foam pools at its mouth and nostrils, and the body is contorted as if it died struggling. As the days go by, the players find more and more bodies.

11. The Temple of Davyd. The legendary Temple of Davyd does exist, but it is hidden by the forest. It is so covered with vines that it blends in with the surroundings. There is a base 10% chance that the party finds the temple whenever they travel through the eastern half of the forest modified as follows:

+30% for each day spent actively looking for the temple
+2% for each member of the party
+3% for each elf in the party
+20% if they heard Bruce's description of the temple
+1% for each half-elf in the party
–20% if searching at night

If the PCs find the temple read the following description:

> Before you is a stone building covered with weeds, vines, and dead leaves, blending almost perfectly into the forest. It is a simple structure, made of the same white stone as the temple in the village. You see no doors, windows or any obvious way inside.

The door is overgrown with weeds, but it can be found with some searching. It is old and swollen with dampness, so the party must force it open or use magical means. This is the only entrance into the building.

Coiled on the roof is a young choke creeper vine. Over the centuries, the magic of the building has permeated and animated the plant life.

Choke Creeper: INT non-; AL nil; AC 6 (vine), 5 (stalk); MV ½; HD 25; hp 25 each branch; THAC0 7; #AT 8; Dmg 1–4; SA strangulation; SD spell immunity; SZ G (20′ long); ML 14; XP 18,000; *MM*/291 (plant, dangerous).

This is a small vine with only eight branches. Each branch attacks independently and has 2 hp above and beyond the total hit points of the vine.

Inside the temple, sunlight filters through slits in the ceiling. Unfortunately they also allow the choke creeper to attack with its branches while the vine sits protected and inaccessible on the roof. Once all of the PCs are inside the temple, the creeper attacks:

Rumors & Red Herrings

All villagers know rumors 2 and 6. They also know 1–2 others from the list below. Rumors known only by specific NPCs are marked with an asterisk (*).

1. No matter what anyone tells you, humans can contract foaming mouth disease. If you are ever bitten by a diseased wolf, the only way to cleanse the wound is with fire. (False, but convincing. Treating a wound in this manner will cause 1 hp damage.)

2. There are wolves in the Mystic Forest, stalking the town. I can hear them howling at night. (True)

3. The disease is fatal to elves and halflings. (False)

*4. Last week I saw a white haired child riding on the back of a huge white wolf. It must be a good omen, and the diseased wolves will leave the town alone. (Partially true. Marie Dumont saw Shyleen riding Janx.)

*5. I saw the wolves running past my farm two nights ago. At the head of the pack was a spirit of a gigantic wolf. It glowed in the darkness like a beacon before the whole pack disappeared into the forest. (Partially true. The "spirit" was actually Janx. This rumor is told by Roger Waye.)

6. The Mystic Forest is normally a very safe place, but with an outbreak of the disease it's best never to enter the woods. (True)

*7. Deep in the Mystic Forest is the old Temple of Davyd. Though I have never seen it, it is said to be a deeply spiritual place. (True. This rumor is told by Brother Michael.)

8. The diseased wolves are not as smart as healthy ones. They are easy to fool and lure into traps. (False)

9. There is a magical fountain in the east end of the Mystic Forest. Any animal who drinks from it is stricken with foaming mouth disease. (False)

10. Foaming mouth is not a disease, it is a primitive curse from the demons of the Abyss. It is an attempt by the demons to possess the minds of those on our plane. So far they have only managed to control the animals, but soon they will learn how to control us as well! (Absolute hogwash.)

11. Normally wolves are cowardly-creatures. The diseased ones, however, are unusually bold. (True)

*12. This town was allegedly named after a great priest named Davyd. He came to rest here and was so well treated by the local population that he forever blessed the town and the forest. (Mostly True. This rumor is told by Brother Michael.)

13. Before the outbreak of this disease there was never much problem with wolves. There are so many rabbits living in the forest that the wolves were always well fed. They were almost domestic! (True)

*14. There is a horrible evil spirit in the woods, I saw him with my own eyes. He was a tall elven creature with golden hair and a long gleaming blade. Shortly after he appeared, the foaming mouth disease struck out cattle. He is the cause of this I tell you! (Partially true. Matt did see Shyleen, but he is not the cause of the disease.)

15. The only way to keep the wolves from attacking is to kill them all. (Possible, but not practical.)

*16. Once upon a time there was a great mage named Davyd who passed through here. He was friendly at first, but the villagers offended him somehow. He cursed the creatures of the forest, so that every fifteen years they would be stricken with the foaming mouth disease. (Largely False. This is a fable told by Marie Dumont.)

*17. I used to think that the forest was uninhabited, but I saw a building there once. It was a squat building made of stone and so overgrown with vines it looked like a little hill. I'll bet there's a hermit living in it! (True, but there is no hermit. Bruce Dreg tells this rumor)

18. Never touch anyone bitten by a diseased wolf! (False superstition. Humans cannot get the disease)

19. It's not the villagers who should be worried about the wolves attacking, it's the farmers. At least here we have strength in numbers, the farmers are pretty much by themselves. (True)

*20. I saw the wolf pack running through the forest near the village. At the lead was a huge golden cat, howling and screaming at the top of its lungs. (Partly true. Ross saw Janx and somehow mistook it for a feline.)

Janx and Shyleen

Shyleen: AL LG; AC 4; F4; hp 11 (normally 27); MV 12; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA +1 to hit with bow and long sword; SD resistance to *sleep* and *charm*; ML 16; chain mail, *two-handed sword +1*, dagger, long bow, long sword, *necklace of protection +1*, special *potion of invisibility*.

Shyleen, an albino elf, is about 5' tall, with long, shocking white hair and eyes. He has not yet recovered from the injuries caused by the wolves. His special *potion of invisibility* renders the imbiber invisible to infravision, and the keen sense of sight and smell of all animals (like wolves). It does not conceal noise, however.

Janx (blink dog): INT average; AL LG; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4; hp 12 (normally 24); THAC0 15 (normally 17); #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA attacks from rear 75% of time, SD *teleportation*; SZ M; ML 15 (normally 12); XP 270: *MM*/57 (dog, blink).

Janx has also been affected by the foaming mouth disease, which has altered his statistics. He is normally friendly and docile, but the disease has made him aggressive and temperamental. He is a large dog with golden fur that shines white under bright light.

This temple may once have been grand, but now it is in ruins. Six wooden pews have rotted and buckled into soggy wooden lumps on the floor. Horribly worm-eaten tapestries dangle limply from the walls, and hunks of rusted metal that might have been candelabra stand on either side of the door. The almost sacred peace of this place is suddenly shattered as half a dozen oily green vines slide silently though holes in the ceiling and reach towards you hungrily.

Unless the party was extremely cautious, the choke creeper automatically gains surprise. The PCs do not have to destroy the vine to remove the threat of the plant. By severing all of the branches, the PCs can render the vine harmless, though the branches grow back in a week.

Decades ago, Father Davyd built this temple for the people of the village to heal their sick and injured. Over the years, it has been forgotten.

Carved into the far wall is an inscription in ancient common. PCs with proficiency in ancient languages can read it all, but others can make out only the text in italics. Mages successfully rolling an Intelligence check on 4d6 understand the writing. The inscription reads:

For those of pure heart and good intentions,
For the wounded, *for the* sick, for those *in dire need.*
Come to *this home* of the goddess of light.
Speak her name and beg her mercy,
So that you who *seek* in earnest *her blessings*
May *be healed.*

Any good-aligned cleric can activate the power of the temple. He need only call out the name of the goddess of light, "Charisis." Any person in the temple afflicted with a natural disease is healed, and those below half their hit points are healed to their maximum. Magical diseases cannot be cured.

This temple may not be abused by the PCs constantly to boost their hit points. The blessing of the temple comes directly from the Goddess Charisis herself, and she does not tolerate misuse of her gift. Good-aligned PCs will feel that this is an extremely holy place, and they understand that they should not even enter the temple unless they are truly in need of its powers.

A party who tries to make selfish use of the temple is ignored at best. If, however, they are persistent or flagrantly disrespectful, Charisis reproaches them and everyone inside the building is reduced to 1 hp:

"Selfish bandits! You dare to expect my favor when it is unearned. Begone, and never return!"

Wolf Attack

The first night the party stays in the village, the wolf pack attacks. Read or paraphrase the following:

You are just about to bed down for the night when you hear the distant howling of a lone wolf. The call is mournful and almost lonely . . . but not for long. Soon its wail is joinedby another, and another, and another, until finally a frenzy of yelping and howling fills the night.

The quiet village erupts into activity as people begin barricading doors and the men gather their weapons to fend off the attack. Within minutes the howling is so loud it smothers everything. You run into the street just in time to see a dozen haggard shapes burst into the light of the town. You see the gleaming teeth, swollen red eyes and frothy snarling grimaces of more than a dozen wolves.

Unless the party runs away, they end up fighting the wolves. Ross and Bess are nearby, and they beg the party to protect the village. The villagers are able to repel the wolves without the party's help, but at the cost of Gaerfeld's and Tracy's lives. If the party does not help, they are treated very coolly until they leave.

The wolves are in a frenzy, and they fight to the death. Gaerfeld and two other farmers fight alongside the party, though they retreat if they lose more than half their hit points.

Farmers (2): AL NG; AC 8; F1; hp 7, 6; MV 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; ML 12; leather armor, long sword, dagger.

This could be a very dangerous battle for the party if they don't fight intelligently. A low level party will be outmatched unless they are creative. After five rounds of combat, read or paraphrase the following.

The awful howling continues to pound the air like a palpable thing. It seems as tangible an enemy as the wolves themselves. You can see and hear other beasts in the trees beyond, but thankfully they choose not to attack.

Suddenly you hear a piercing howl unlike any wolf's. You see a bright spark of light, and a shimmering white wolf appears in the middle of the fray. It glares at you with puffy red eyes, and foam drips from its lips. It leaps to attack.

This is Janx, and he attacks a random PC until he is injured, at which point he *blinks* away. He does not reappear during this battle.

If the party defeats the animals, the villagers make a great cheer. Most go to work piling the bodies of the wolves to be burned. Bess and Brother Michael tend the PCs' wounds.

This event repeats itself for the next three nights, after which all the wolves die of foaming mouth disease. Each night that the villagers must defend themselves against the wolves without the party's help, another villager is killed.

Shyleen

The next day, everyone in the village is both relieved and nervous. They are pleased the party has repelled the wolves, but they are also scared of the great ghostly white wolf that appeared and disappeared from out of nowhere.

On this day, if the party enters the forest, they encounter Shyleen. If they remain in town, nothing happens, but the events of day 2 occur whenever they enter the forest after the first day. On the fourth night, Janx dies and Shyleen leaves the Mystic Forest.

As the party travels through the forest, they hear the same chilling howl that came from the white wolf . . . but not quite the same. A ranger or character with the animal lore proficiency can tell that it is a person imitating the wolf call. (Shyleen is calling to Janx.) If they try to locate the source, they find Shyleen in a nearby clearing yowling at the top of his lungs. Otherwise, he eventually wanders out of earshot.

Shyleen is cautious of the party, but he does not attack. He is distrustful of humans and treats them coolly. He does not explain himself unless convinced the party is honorable.

Shyleen is obviously injured. He has bound wounds on his body that are bleeding through their dressings. Offering to help him with his injuries goes a long way toward building trust.

If the party asks about his injuries, Shyleen explains that he was attacked by the wolves, but he does not mention Janx. If the PCs ask why he was making wolf calls, he looks at the ground and mumbles that he was trying to attract the wolves so he could kill them once and for all. He is not a good liar.

If the party does win his trust, or if they mention the white wolf, he tells them that Janx has the foaming mouth disease. He begs the party to help him rescue his animal; he is desperately afraid that if he can't help Janx soon, the disease will kill him. As payment he offers the party his magical necklace and all his money (1 pp, 14 gp, and 4 sp).

Unless the party is truly cold-hearted, they should agree to help.

To Capture a Friend

Capturing Janx without killing him is a challenge. Conventional traps do not work because he can simply *blink* out of them. Tracking him is also nearly impossible for the same reason. Shyleen offers his special *potion of invisibility* to the party to help.

Janx returns each night to the village to attack with the rest of the pack, and this proves to be the party's best opportunity to capture him. Shyleen violently opposes any force used against Janx, but he allows the party to use subduing attacks.

Certain spells can be useful as well. In his brain-addled state, Janx automatically fails his saving throws against any illusions. Thus *color spray* subdues him immediately. A successful *sleep* spell also works. Casting *taunt* at the animal so enrages him that he attacks fearlessly for four rounds and does not try to *blink* away. The clerical spell *sanctuary* could also be very useful.

One aspect of Janx's *blink* ability could also work in the party's favor. Blink dogs can also *teleport* one other being in physical contact with them. This is why they are useful as steeds, because they can take their riders great distances. This means that if a PC grapples with Janx when he *teleports*, the PC *blinks* as well. Thus, it is possible to follow Janx as long as a PC can hold on. Shyleen knows this, of course, but he does not offer the information unless asked.

There are many possible ways to catch Janx. PCs using logic, ingenuity, and a well-thought out plan should succeed.

So Close and Yet So Far

If the PCs manage to capture Janx, he remains subdued for the rest of the adventure. He merely lies around, weak and feverish. The illness resists any magical healing the party may have, and Brother Michael is not able to offer help either. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The noble dog looks terribly sick. His golden-white fur is matted with dirt and blood from old, drying wounds. His eyes, nose, and mouth ooze thick white foam. He looks at Shyleen with an unmistakable intelligence and whimpers pitifully.
>
> Shyleen stares at his friend and speaks huskily. "Janx will not survive much longer. The other wolves are already dying from the disease, and I fear so too will my friend." His eyes grow watery, and he stops speaking.

If the PCs have already discovered the Temple of Davyd they should be able to recognize a solution to the problem. Perhaps they have already even found it. If time is running desperately short, and the party cannot figure it out for themselves, Brother Michael makes a suggestion:

> "Perhaps the building Bruce Dreg found in the forest is actually the temple! It is possible, after all. Father Davyd was a powerful healer, and the legends say he left some of his powers behind so that the people of Davyd's Rest would never be at the whim of disease!"

Once the PCs find the temple, it may take some memory jogging or a quick trip back to Brother Michael to remember the name of Charisis, the goddess of light.

Bear in mind the amount of time Janx has left to live. If things have gone well and the party has a lot of time left, give them as little help as possible. If time is very short, they may require some hints to succeed. Essentially, the party should be cringing under the pressure of time so the adventure has an exciting finish.

Once the party locates the Temple of Davyd, they should bring Janx there to heal him. All those in the room who are heavily injured, including Shyleen, are also healed. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Shyleen lays the great golden dog gently on the floor, where Janx whimpers in pain. His sickness is so much worse that he can barely move. His breathing is labored and bubbles with the heavy foam weigh-

Continued on page 72

A WATERY DEATH

by J. Lee Cunningham

"What dreadful noise of water in mine ears!"

William Shakespeare, *Richard III*

Artwork by Stephen Schwartz

Lee Writes: "Some of the best ideas for adventurers often stem from asking the question, 'What if?' This adventure is no exception. I wish to dedicate it to those who served as the inspiration for Jonquil and Sorceress Snapp. Best regards to JQ and Juliana. Also, a special thanks goes out to Terry, Pat, Moose, Bill, and John for all their support. Thanks, guys."

"A Watery Death" is an AD&D® adventure for a party of 4–6 good-aligned PCs of 7th–10th level (about 42 total levels). The party should contain at least one wizard and possess several +2 or better magical weapons. It is also strongly recommended that the DM familiarize himself with the rules for drowning and underwater combat in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* before running this adventure.

Adventure Background

Recently, the wizard Alvazar fell victim to a plot conceived by two of his minions: an imprisoned water weird and a disgruntled nereid. Alvazar had kept this pair subject to his will by promising eventually to reinstate the weird to the elemental plane of water and to return the nereid's captured soul-shawl, which contains the nereid's life essence. Over the years, however, it became apparent to Alvazar's slaves that their master had no intention of honoring his promise. Thus, Vlash, the wizard's guardian water weird, convinced Jonquil, Alvazar's nereid companion, that the only way either of them would ever gain what they most desired would be to take matters into their own hands. Thus, Vlash instructed Jonquil to slip the wizard a *philter of love* potion in his evening tea, whereby an enamored Alvazar would lead his servants to his vault. Once in the vault, Vlash would possess the vault's guardian, a water elemental, while Jonquil instructed Alvazar to retrieve her stolen soul-shawl from the safe. She would then command the wizard to use his *amulet of the planes* to return Vlash to the elemental plane of water; afterward, Jonquil would make good her escape before the *philter of love* potion's effect wore off.

The plan was a sound one, and it worked just as Vlash had said. Jonquil was beginning to think that she would finally be free when something terrible

happened. At the moment of Jonquil's *charm*, Alvazar was in the middle of a very delicate experiment, and he left an extremely powerful concoction unattended in his lab to perform the nereid's bidding. This mixture soon boiled over onto the lab table, mixing with other elixirs to form a mighty explosive. The resulting blast leveled the small tower. Furthermore, this explosion occurred just as Alvazar was in the process of opening a gate to the elemental plane of water. The blast not only brought a section of the vault down on Alvazar, killing him instantly, it also caused the gate to close prematurely. A side-effect of the severing of this planar link was that Jonquil's soul-shawl was suddenly torn from her grasp and drawn partway into the closing gate. The shawl now lies imbedded at the point of the gate's origin, the floor of the vault, and only a foot or so of its silvery fabric remains suspended in the prime material plane. Thus, the only way to free the soul-shawl intact is to reopen the gate. Until that occurs, Jonquil remains bound to the vicinity of the tower's ruins.

Vlash also remains trapped, for only a wizard can use the *amulet of the planes*. Both Vlash and Jonquil realize that the only way they can be free is to find another wizard to employ Alvazar's *amulet* and reopen the gate. However, having been enslaved once, Vlash and Jonquil are reluctant to trust their chance at freedom to the charity of wandering wizards. They have thus devised a plan to take control of the situation.

For the Player Characters

The PCs begin this adventure as agents of the Sorceress Snapp. They are delivering a package to Alvazar which contains the missing seal to his *iron flask*. Alvazar asked Snapp to send the brass seal as repayment for a long-overdue loan, for he felt that the threat of confinement in the iron flask might serve to check Vlash's growing impertinence. The sorceress has already paid the PCs 1,000 gp, and she has promised that the same amount is forthcoming from Alvazar once the package reaches its destination. At some point in this adventure, the PCs may decide to open the package. If so, inside they find an ornate brass stopper and the following letter:

My dearest Alvazar,

I hope you find this item useful, for I believe it is the missing piece to your iron flask. The merchant I acquired it from said the seal was part of the treasure recovered from the Sea Whisper's wreck. Since your seal was lost on that same vessel, I have little doubt you will be pleased with the item. I am also certain that the threat of confinement in the iron flask will keep your impertinent guardian in check, for the nasty little creatures would rather be destroyed than suffer such a fate. In any event, I trust this brass seal and my partial payment of its delivery fee clears our debt. Please be so kind as to pay my agents the rest of their fee—1,000 gold pieces—upon delivery of the package.

By the way, I am told that considerable wealth still remains on the wreck of the Sea Whisper. Perhaps we should consider fronting an expedition to the wreck. Those we employ would have to be very heroic (possibly my agents), for the survivors of the last mission claim a huge sea beast prowls the area—no doubt the same creature which forced you off the Sea Whisper so many years ago. I chuckle to think of you floundering about in the ocean with only the power of your water slave standing between you and death. Tell me, my dear Alvazar, did you ever free the liquified tart from her enslavement? Or have you spent these years trying to convince yourself that the poor creature loves you?

Well, whatever the case, stay in touch and keep your spell books dry.

Yours in magic,

Snapp

P.S. I have done some research on the seal and discovered that its command word is Namar.

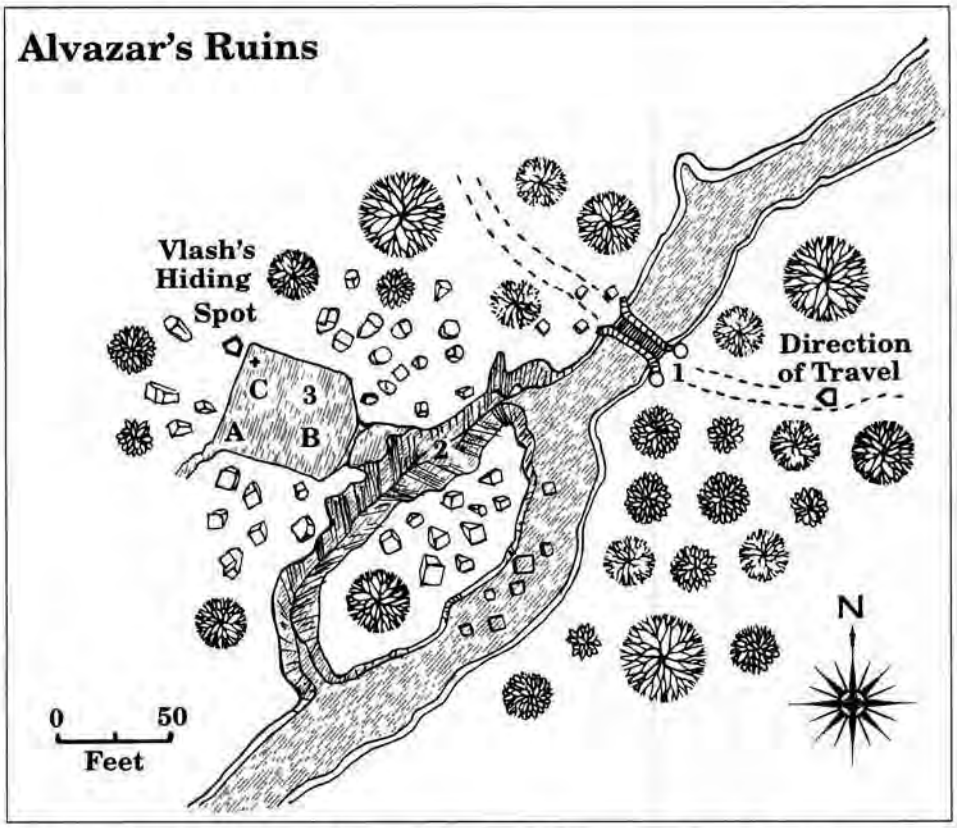
1. The Crossing. Read or paraphrase the following as soon as the adventurers reach the stream:

> Your trek through the forest brings you to the edge of a rather large stream. You have been anticipating its discovery, for your present employer, the Sorceress Snapp, was precise in her directions. The presence of a granite bridge, a gray slab offset with two dragon head sculptures, confirms that this is indeed the location of the wizard Alvazar's domain. According to Snapp, once you cross the bridge, Alvazar's tower should be just to the southwest. Then, all that remains is to deliver Snapp's unadorned package and collect the other half of your payment from Alvazar.
>
> Observing how swiftly the stream flows, you are glad for the sturdy bridge at what would otherwise be a difficult crossing. Yet, it is the collection of large granite blocks on the far bank which captures your attention. These huge quarried stones lie sprinkled about on the stream's edge like some giant child's discarded building blocks. You can't help wonder why Snapp, who was so thorough in her description of other landmarks, neglected to mention these massive stones.

Once the PCs cross to the center of the bridge, they can observe further evidence of the tower's destruction. Yet, before the PCs can explore the ruins, Vlash and Jonquil put their plan into action. They wait in ambush near the stream's bridge, a slippery slab of stone with no hand-railings. Jonquil uses her abilities to form a fake water weird, which attacks the party from the north, while Vlash moves in from the south.

Once an unarmored adventurer casts a spell, Jonquil uses her *control water* ability to send a wave crashing over the bridge while Vlash engulfs the spell-caster and carries him back to the vault. The nereid follows Vlash to the vault and instructs the "wizard" (an unarmored PC using a potion or scroll could be easily mistaken for a wizard) to reopen the gate. Adventurers attempting to rescue this captive encounter staunch opposition from Vlash and Jonquil; Vlash hates all earth-dwellers, and Jonquil simply distrusts those that might enslave her again.

Although Vlash and Jonquil realize that armored individuals have a more difficult time in water, the pair focus their attacks on unarmored victims in an attempt to provoke spell casting. Once a wizard reveals himself, Vlash



and Jonquil center their attacks on him. The victim may avoid being swept off the bridge by rolling under his Dexterity at a –3 penalty; if Vlash and Jonquil happen to focus their sweeping attacks on armored individuals, the disadvantage to the Dexterity check increases based on the armor worn. The DM should make a note of the penalties assessed to the following types of armor and add that figure to the PC's Dexterity penalty:

Armor Type	Penalty
All leather, hide, and ring mail	–1
Brigandine, scale, and chain mail	–2
Splint, banded, and bronze plate	–3
Plate mail and field plate	–4
Full plate	–5
*Shield carried	–1

* Added to armor penalty

Once the PC has been caught, his companions may attempt to rescue him with ropes and other life-preserving devices, but the DM should note that Vlash's captive will be too busy fighting the weird-elemental's attack to be of much assistance in his own rescue. Also, the weird-elemental moves very quickly and traverses the distance from the attack point to the treasure vault in 2–4 rounds.

If the adventurers attempt to find a means of crossing the stream other than the bridge, the weird-elemental and nereid attempt to undermine the footing of those near the stream's edge, causing the bank to give way and plunge victims into the swift stream. (Such PCs must roll under their Dexterity at a –3 penalty to avoid losing their footing). In this case, Vlash and Jonquil strive to conceal these attacks; only if it appears that their ambush might fail do they reveal themselves. Also, the DM should note that the weird-elemental possesses the attack abilities of both elemental and water weird, but it can employ only one attack method at a time. Thus, if the creature chooses to drown its opponent, it cannot inflict elemental damage; it must do one or the other. The weird-elemental's current goal, however, is to get its captive into the treasure vault alive, so the DM need not concern himself with its drowning attack just yet. In fact, the weird-elemental assures that its captive doesn't drown by keeping the PC's head above water.

Vlash (weird-elemental): INT very; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6/12; HD 16; hp 100; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 5–30; SA water weird drowning attack; SD +2 or better to hit, suffers 1 point/strike from sharp-edged weapons, half-damage from fire based spells; SZ L; ML 17; XP 10,000; *MM*/100 & 104.

Vlash has taken the best aspects of the water elemental and merged them with his own abilities. Thus, the weird-elemental is likely to catch even the most experienced adventurer off guard, as it maintains a formidable weird defense to bladed weapons. Yet, it is Vlash's intelligence and hatred for earth-dwellers which sets him apart from other elementals.

In order to keep his captive PC from being rescued, Vlash does not lash out mindlessly but holds the rest of the party in check by threatening to kill the PC. The threat is a bluff, but the adventurers have no way of knowing this. Vlash's haunting voice is difficult to understand, sounding like waves crashing in a storm, but if the PCs listen closely they can make out the weird-elemental's demands. Although Vlash is reluctant to negotiate with earth-dwellers, his attention can be caught with talk of the elemental plane of water or the discussion of spell casting. (Vlash has taken an interest in wizardry, and he secretly wishes to learn more of the craft). If the party calls the weird-elemental's bluff, Vlash retaliates with deadly accuracy, utilizing a hit-and-run assault which entails striking and blending in with the vault's surrounding water.

Jonquil (nereid): INT very; AL CG; AC 10; MV 12, swim 12; HD 4; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA drowning, *control water* within 30', and spit blinding venom; SD ability to avoid weapon damage or capture by making a successful save vs. poison, all males incapable of harming nereid (no saving throw); SZ M (4'6" tall); ML 11; XP 975; *MM*/104.

The nereid is 95% undetectable in water. Once an unarmored individual casts a spell, Jonquil aids Vlash by sending a wave of water over the bridge. All PCs must roll under their Dexterity or find themselves in the stream. Jonquil then retreats to the vault in order to convey Vlash's demands to the captured adventurer. However, if the rest of the PCs appear to be making a viable rescue attempt at

the bridge, Jonquil spits venom at a distance of 20', blinding a target for 2–12 rounds if she hits (the venom can be washed away with water). Only in the most dire circumstance does Jonquil use her most deadly attack—a kiss which drowns any man unless a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon is made at a –2 penalty.

Jonquil is not a bad sort; she just wants to reacquire her soul-shawl and return to the sea. In fact, if her past experiences with men had been more amicable, she would ask the PCs for aid instead of resorting to Vlash's plan.

2. The Rift. This small rift is 10' deep and slows adventurers, especially armored ones traversing the stream's offshoot. A remnant from Alvazar's lab, an ivory scroll case sealed with wax, lies at the bottom of the rift. PCs have a 25% chance of finding the item each turn they spend searching. Inside the scroll case they discover a scroll of *guards and wards* and *chain lightning.*

3. The Treasure Vault. The integrity of this chamber survived the explosion, forming an underground pool some 5' deep. A large fissure in the west corner permits much of the stream's runoff to drain into an underground river system below. Adventurers attempting combat in this chamber strike at a –2 and suffer an AC penalty of –2 due to the chamber's water level.

Once the weird-elemental has the captive PC secured in this chamber's northwest corner, he drapes Alvazar's *amulet of the planes* (5 charges) over the PC's neck. Next, Jonquil appears and instructs the wizard on what must be done. A wizard who studies the *amulet* for at least a turn and succeeds in rolling under his Intelligence at a –5 penalty manages to reopen the gate. If the wizard fails, he may try again in five rounds.

Vlash commands Jonquil to stall the party until the gate is reopened. The nereid first attempts to negotiate with the PCs, but if her attempts are unsuccessful, she goes on the offensive. The DM should note that throughout this negotiation process Jonquil defers to Vlash for instructions, addressing him by name. Thus the adventurers may learn Vlash's name, which is a key factor in using the *iron flask.*

The captive PC can also buy time for himself by discussing matters of wizardry with Vlash, for the weird-elemental wishes to know more about magic and the *amulet's* function. If the wizard answers only the most rudimentary questions about the *amulet* and magic, Vlash delays the reopening of the gate for 4–7 rounds to listen to the PC. However, if the PC tries to impress or frighten Vlash with explanations of powerful spells, the weird-elemental views the wizard as a valuable tutor and decides to take the PC back to the elemental plane of water once the gate is reopened. Once back in its own plane, Vlash demands that the wizard teach him how to cast spells. Of course, the PC dies in the weird-elemental's plane without the ability to survive underwater (*ring of water breathing, helm of underwater action,* or spells), but Vlash gives little concern to this matter, for in his view a worthy tutor would possess the means to survive.

As for those PCs who decide to attack Vlash or retrieve items from the open safe, they encounter severe opposition from the weird-elemental. Vlash temporarily abandons his captive, and using the PC as bait, the weird-elemental lures the other adventurers into an area where he can use both his elemental and weird-drowning attacks on the party. Yet Vlash keeps an eye out for his captive to make sure the wizard doesn't escape during this combat. Jonquil, on the other hand, limits her attacks to spitting venom and *controlling water.* The nereid views combat only as a necessary step in obtaining freedom, and she attempts to leave the vault as soon as her soul-shawl has been released from the stone. However, if the party manages to defeat Vlash, Jonquil throws herself on the PCs' mercy and explains that she did what she did only to survive. She also explains that she possesses knowledge of a sunken wreck laden with treasure and, providing she is set free, promises to guide the party to it. This wreck is the *Sea Whisper.* Further information on this ship appears at the end of this adventure.

PCs who acquire the *iron flask* from the safe can defeat Vlash by pointing the *flask* at him and uttering Vlash's name in conjunction with the command word found in Snapp's letter. If Vlash fails his save vs. spell, the water weird is ripped from the elemental and drawn into the *flask* where it remains until released; since the *flask* can hold only one creature at a time, the water elemental remains behind. Fortunately for the adventurers, this severing from Vlash disorients the elemental for three rounds, so the party has time to act before the creature attacks. Those adventurers who opt to use the *flask* on Jonquil instead of Vlash find that the nereid is more resistant than her cohort. The DM should first check Jonquil's magic resistance before rolling her saving throw vs. spell.

a. The Treasure Vault Fissure. This crack in the wall empties into a series of underground streams. Alvazar's bloated corpse lies wedged in the middle. He has been dead less than two weeks, so clerics should be able to employ a *speak with dead* spell effectively.

b. Below the surface of the water, on the vault's floor, lies the origin of the gate and the end of Jonquil's soul-shawl. The shawl cannot be pulled free of the rock, and Jonquil attacks anyone attempting to do so. Once the gate has been reopened, the soul-shawl floats to the surface

c. This is the location of Alvazar's opened safe. Peering inside, the PCs discover that many of Alvazar's scrolls have been ruined by the weird-elemental's antics. However, the PCs find the *iron flask* and the following in a cedar coffer: a *wand of fire* (12 charges), a *stone of weight,* and a *potion of red dragon control.*

Concluding the Adventure

There are two ways in which the PCs can learn of this adventure's background. One involves using a *speak with dead* on Alvazar's corpse, and the other requires the PCs to aid Jonquil in retrieving her soul-shawl. If the PCs succeed in the latter method, Jonquil guides the adventurers to the sunken wreck of the *Sea Whisper.* This ship still contains 15,000 gp and several magical items left to the DM's imagination. The DM should feel free to flesh out the expedition to the wreck as much as possible, keeping in mind that some massive sea beast (sea turtle, giant squid, or kraken) prowls the area near the wreck. The PCs may even decide to return to Snapp for aid in establishing the expedition. The sorceress is sorry to

Continued on page 65

THE BIGGER THEY ARE...

BY STEVE JOHNSON

It's the little things that kill

Artwork by Tom Baxa

Steve Writes: "I recently graduated from Iowa State University with a B.A. in Art & Design, and I am currently working as a draftsman for a military computer firm. I've always wanted to submit something to DUNGEON® Adventures, but just hadn't the time. Role-playing, though, is something I always make time for, whether DMing or playing. Books and TV often give me that creative spark, and I think 'The Bigger They Are' was inspired by Drizz't Do'Urden's city of Menzoberranzan and the Keebler Elves!"

"The Bigger They Are . . ." is an AD&D® game adventure for a party of 5–8 PCs of 2nd–4th level (about 24 total levels). The group should include at least two spellcasters and a good mix of other classes, especially those adept in the wilderness, such as rangers and druids. A variety of abilities are necessary to overcome the main villain, who can be quite deadly if the DM plays him to his fullest potential. The setting for the adventure is any thickly wooded area, preferably one with a mysterious reputation. This is a tough encounter that the PCs are not likely to forget!

For the Dungeon Master

The characters have stumbled across the territory of Angwarnggaxx, a quickling whose capacity for cruel (and often lethal) practical jokes and thievery is unmatched. Years ago, Angwarnggaxx lived with his clan in a distant part of the same forest. The quicklings enjoyed a prosperous existence waylaying travelers and annoying the local elves. But this was not to last, as the area soon acquired a dangerous reputation and, as a result, was scrupulously avoided by anyone with common sense. Even the elves, known for their infinite patience, finally gave up and left in search of more peaceful dwellings. Greatly disappointed, the quicklings of the clan separated, each going his own way to find better prospects.

In his travels, Angwarnggaxx stumbled across a delightfully wicked part of the forest overgrown with huge fungi of all types. Reminded of home, the quickling settled in and carved out rooms and passages within two of the largest mushrooms he could find.

Weeks later, Angwarnggaxx discovered that the drow had a hidden entrance to the surface nearby. During one of the drow raids, the quickling encountered a

priestess of Lolth who immediately took a liking to him. She bestowed him with the gift of four large spider pets; in return, all he had to do was act as their scout on the surface, reporting the movements of any elves he should happen to spy. This he was more than glad to do, blaming the elves for "ruining his fun" by moving away. Things were looking up for the nasty little brownie. All he had to do was wait.

Lost in the Woods

The PCs, having traveled for some time through the strange, dense woods, have become hopelessly lost when they suddenly stumble upon an overgrown path. Following the old trail, they pass around a bend and come to a fork. A tiny offshoot of the path (a mere foot or so wide) leads off to right, while the original strays off into such a thickly wooded area that it is soon lost to sight. The PCs' only option is the smaller path, for the original path is too dense and tangled to traverse. If the PCs still try to penetrate the woods, the DM should discourage them by describing the spooky, eerie nature of the trees in the region, emphasizing the atmosphere with occasional far off howls from some unknown creature.

1. Tiny Path. The offshoot path leads up a gently sloping hill, winds around, and ends at the quickling's lair. If the characters look closely, they notice scores of tiny animal bones strewn around. These are the remains of Angwarnggaxx's meals, dumped here to puzzle the unwary and perhaps lure them into an ambush.

2. The Trick. Hidden in the dense woods just around the next bend in the path waits Angwarnggaxx, ready to trick the PCs into an ambush. He stands on a secret path that runs parallel to the PCs', but that is separated from theirs by several feet of especially dense woods. This secret path is only about 6′ wide and 2′ high (the undergrowth forms a ceiling of sorts), but it provides plenty of room for the tiny quickling. The path becomes apparent should anyone stumble upon it, but otherwise it is quite hidden. Using his *ventriloquism* ability, Angwarnggaxx imitates the voices of two goblins coming from farther down the path. The goblins are apparently arguing over a sword and some treasure they have taken from a captive dwarf. One wishes to kill and eat the dwarf immediately, while the other argues that he must be questioned about the items first. Read the following boxed description:

> From farther down the path you catch two gravelly voices. From the sound of things, they seem to be gloating over a captive of some sort.
>
> "Ha! It's into the pot fer you, my lad! That'll teach ya ta come sneakin' into goblin territory!" says the first.
>
> "Nar," says the second, "hold yer wagons! He's got some answerin' ta do about that prickly sword of his! Nearly burnt the hair off my ears with that thing! Mind you, dwarf, speak up quick! Maybe old king Bungo will let ya keep some of that gold if ya squeal about the sword! Then again, maybe you'll be lucky just ta keep yer hide!"
>
> The two goblins burst into laughter, then their voices fade as they apparently start to walk away.

If the PCs pursue the voices down the path, Angwarnggaxx shadows them the entire way, staying on the parallel path and using his *ventriloquism* ability until the PCs reach the wall of thorns surrounding his lair. There he imitates the sounds of the goblins opening a trap door and descending into a tunnel. Angwarnggaxx hopes the PCs continue to investigate his lair. Remaining 100% invisible while motionless, he watches the PCs to gauge their strengths and weaknesses, and to determine who has the best items to steal. He takes action only when they attempt to breach or bypass the wall.

3. Wall of Thorns.

> Reaching the end of the path, you enter a small clearing occupied by a circular wall of thorns 10′ high and 60′ wide. There is no sign of the goblins.

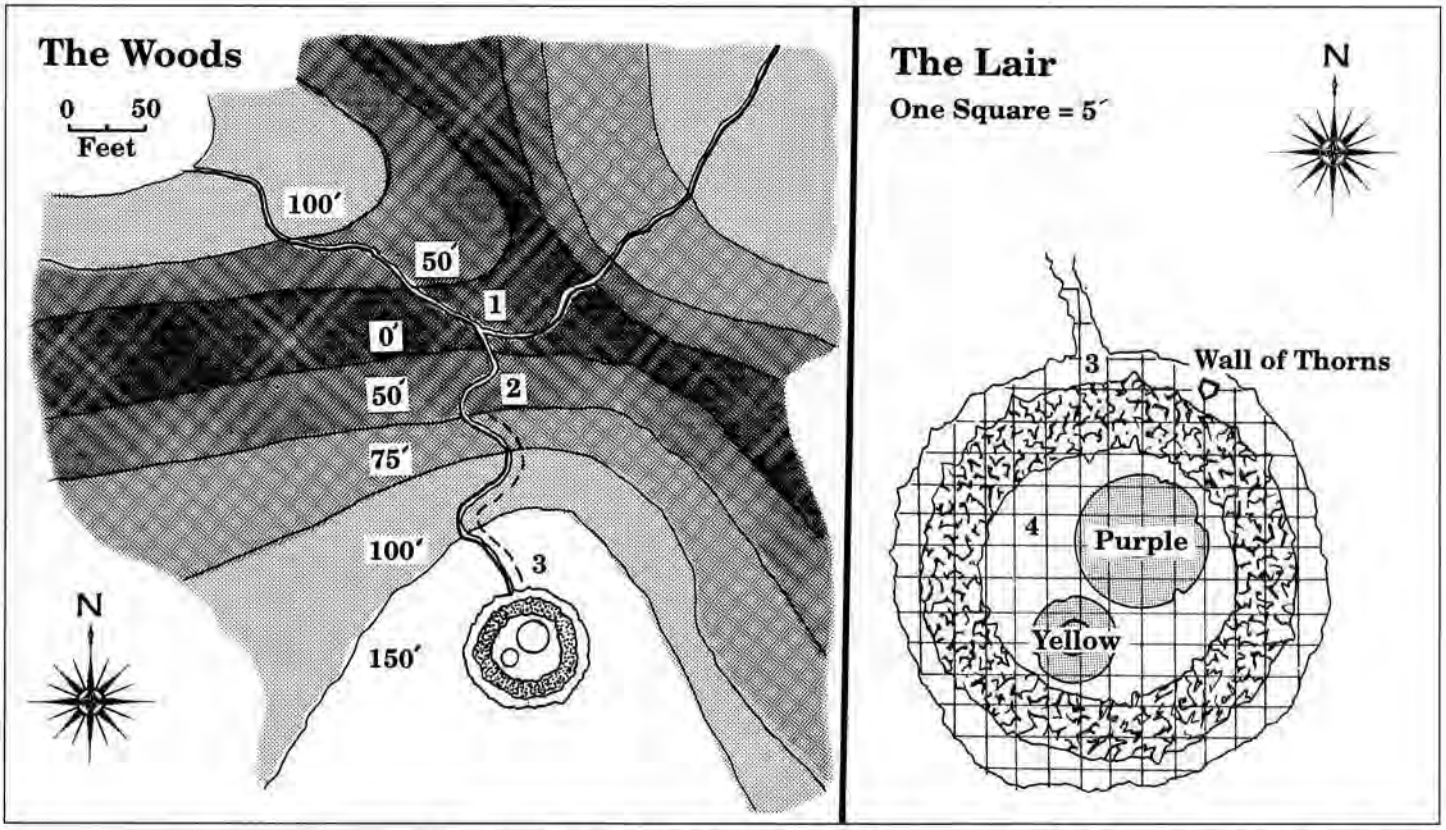
Due to the evil and magical nature of these woods, immense patches of deadly thorns grow in many areas. The thorns that grow around Angwarnggaxx's lair are particularly large and sharp. This protects Angwarnggaxx from larger unwanted riffraff, but still allows enough space for the small quickling to pass through, although at half his normal movement rate. Thus, he is free to move around while others must hack or burn their way through.

The wall is 10′ high and wide, growing in a 60′ diameter circle around the quickling's mushroom lair. It is dense enough to prevent anything larger than 2′ tall from passing through. Anyone attempting to do so suffers 4 hp damage, or 8 if they charge into it. It takes PCs three turns to hack their way through the thorny wall. If the thorns are set aflame, a 10′ × 10′ section is destroyed before the fire dies out. Those within 10′ of the flames suffer 1d4 hp damage from the heat. Because the thorns are so tough and full of sap, fire burns out after only one turn.

Should the PCs attempt to destroy the entire wall with fire, Angwarnggaxx uses *fire charm* on the blaze, causing anyone viewing it to save vs. spell or be *charmed* into remaining still and gazing into the fire. While so charmed, victims are vulnerable to suggestions of 12 words or less, saving at –3, with Wisdom bonuses applicable. Angwarnggaxx instructs *charmed* characters to drop any weapons or items held in their hands. Then he streaks by and snatches the objects, taking them back to the secret path for inspection. Remember that quicklings are 90% invisible when moving, so to the PCs it should appear that the dropped items suddenly vanished. If he is detected while snatching the items, Angwarnggaxx instructs *charmed* PCs to attack the rest of the party, specifically going after anyone attacking the quickling. If any of the stolen items are useful to him, Angwarnggaxx does not hesitate to use them against the PCs when necessary. He keeps useless items hidden on the secret path.

4. Mysterious Mushrooms. Once the PCs have bypassed or breached the wall of thorns, they are greeted by a bizarre sight. Read the following to the players:

> Towering over various clumps of weeds and brambles are two huge mushrooms. The northernmost is 15′ tall with a 4′ diameter stalk and a 20′ diameter canopy. It is a glossy purple mushroom blotched with spots of black and green. Thorns nearly 4′ long sprout from the brambles surrounding it, each dripping a sap-like substance that hardens upon hitting the ground. The mushroom itself is slick with some sort of translucent slime, but what is



more amazing are the tiny shuttered windows dotting the stalk here and there! Each nearly matches the exterior of the mushroom and seems to be made of the same material.

The second mushroom is about 15′ southwest of the first. It is 10′ high and 6′ wide, with a 12′ diameter canopy. The dingy yellow mushroom emits an unpleasant odor reminiscent of decaying flesh and mold. The slimy canopy is studded with puffy knobs of brightly colored spores.

There appear to be no windows or doors, but it is festooned with large spider webs. Strung in the webs are small cocoons, animal bones, a vial, and several golden trinkets such as armbands, hoops, rings, and even a necklace. Fortunately, whatever made the webs does not appear to be at home right now.

These two mushrooms serve as Angwarnggaxx's dwellings. He has hollowed them out and carved tiny rooms and chambers within. The 2′ high door is located on the southwest side of the purple mushroom, disguised to look just like the outside of the mushroom, so treat it as a secret door. The windows, however, are not disguised but open only from the inside. An underground tunnel leads from the purple mushroom and up into the yellow one.

Though he feels the area is his home, Angwarnggaxx finds that its natural bizarreness makes it an irresistible lure and trap. The thorn brambles around the mushrooms ooze a sap that induces sleep in any human or demi-human (dwarf, elf, half-elf, gnome, or halfling) pricked by them. PCs must save vs. poison at +2 or sleep for 2d4 rounds. Note that unless the characters voluntarily enter the bramble patches they are in no danger of being pricked, but searching among them is dangerous. There is a 50% chance per round the searcher is pricked and must make a saving throw. Remember that the brambles surround the mushrooms, and that anyone trying to take the gold items from the spider webs must stand in thorn bushes. (In addition to several cocoons the webs hold a vial containing a potion of *diminution*, one gold and emerald necklace worth 300 gp, three gold and silver rings worth 50 gp each—one is a *ring of regeneration*, though Angwarnggaxx doesn't know it— two gold armbands worth 30 gp each, and one pair of gold hoop earrings worth 15 gp.)

The magic of the area has permeated the mushrooms and given them some unique properties as well. They secrete a slime that protects them from all forms of fire and lightning, normal and magical. They have also become incredibly tough on the outside, so edged and piercing weapons used against them have a 50% chance of becoming stuck for 1–4 turns. Thieves attempting to climb them or find traps on them discover the sap is very sticky and difficult to wipe off, so any attempts are made at –15%. The yellow mushroom has an additional defense mechanism: whenever it is violently disturbed, it fires clouds of spores from above and below its canopy. PCs within 10′ of the mushroom are caught in the spore cloud and must save vs. poison or succumb to choking and coughing fits for 1d4 rounds, during which time they can do nothing. Angwarnggaxx and his spiders have built up a resistance over time and are immune to the spores. The mushroom can fire its spores only once per day, as they require time to grow back. Both mushrooms can withstand a total of 50 hp damage before they are destroyed.

The yellow mushroom is the home of Angwarnggaxx's pets: four large spiders named Icky, Wicky, Ticky, and Sticky. They hide out on top of the canopy when the PCs arrive and ambush them as soon as either mushroom is touched, slinging down webs to entangle the unwary, then attacking with their poisonous bites. They will not harm Angwarnggaxx, as he has been blessed by the drow priestess and is considered their friend.

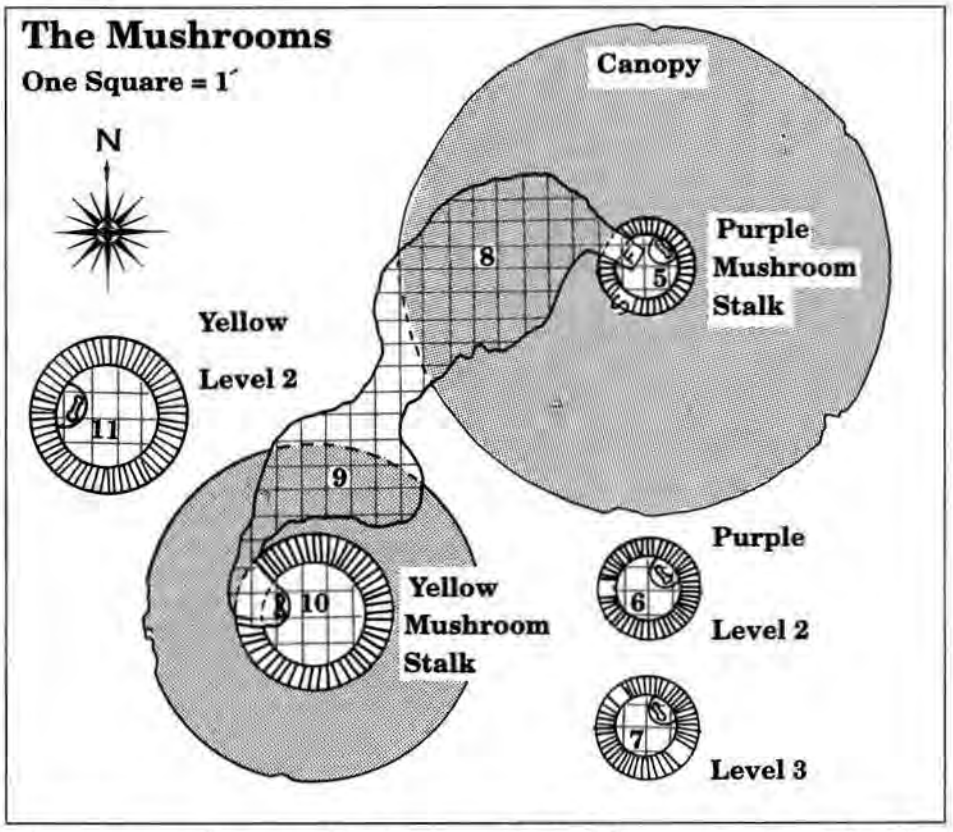
Large spiders (4): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 (bite); SA poison; SZ S (2′ diameter); ML 7; XP 175; *MM*/326.

Angwarnggaxx joins the fray only to steal items from incapacitated PCs (those who are sleeping from the thorn poison or slain by the spiders). Sleeping or unconscious PCs are not merely robbed, though. Angwarnggaxx has two doses of *dust of diminution,* the effects of which are very similar to a potion of the same type, except that the effects of the *dust* are permanent and the victim is shrunk to 25% of his original size (so a 6′-tall fighter would be reduced to a tiny 18″). This can be countered with *dust of growth* (Angwarnggaxx has some hidden in his treasure room, area 10) or a successful *dispel magic* or *remove curse.*

He invisibly approaches incapacitated PCs, steals any interesting items, and then sprinkles the *dust* upon them. Having done this, Angwarnggaxx carries sleeping, shrunken PCs to the parlor room (area 7) in the purple mushroom. There he ties them up and keeps them as hostages if he should later need to bargain. This action takes three rounds.

Angwarnggaxx does not attack with his dagger unless the fight goes badly for the spiders. If this is the case, he attacks the PCs he believes to be the most dangerous. PCs rendered unconscious from the dagger's poison are likely to be *dusted* and carried to the parlor.

The quickling prefers to use his magical powers on the PCs while remaining invisible. He casts *levitate* on strong fighters to lift them up above the fray where they cannot attack, then drops them from a height of 10′ (falling damage is 1d6). Angwarnggaxx casts *shatter* on fragile items like potions, if the PCs have any (and the quickling has not already stolen them). *Dig* is useful for opening up holes under the PCs feet in the middle of the fight.



Angwarnggaxx does everything he can to take out PCs who discover him. A *forget* spell cast upon the PC might give Angwarnggaxx time to hide. If he feels he is in danger, he flees into the purple mushroom.

Angwarnggaxx (quickling): INT exceptional; AL CE (N); AC –3 (due to speed and invisibility); MV 96; HD 1 + 1–4 hp; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d2 (dagger); SA poisoned dagger, save vs. poison or rendered unconscious for 2d4 rounds (Angwarnggaxx has only three doses of this poison), magic powers once/day: *ventriloquism, forget, levitate, shatter, dig*, and *fire charm*, SD 90% invisible when moving, 100% invisible when motionless, save vs. damaging attacks as a 19th-level priest; SZ T (1′ tall); ML 13; XP 2,000; GREYHAWK® Adventures MC Appendix.

5. Entry. Beyond the secret door is a circular chamber about 2′ in diameter and height. A ladder made of thick, strong sticks lashed with vines leads up 3′ through a hole in the ceiling to the next level. Built into the hard earthen floor near the ladder is a wooden trap door also made of sticks and vines. It has no hinge, but is simply lifted off the ground and moved aside to reveal a 1′-wide circular passage leading straight down 3′ into a subterranean chamber.

This chamber is Angwarnggaxx's sleeping quarters (area 8). The passage is equipped with a ladder. Obviously only someone under 2′ tall can fit in this room. Shrunken characters could move through this place with ease, of course, providing they are not asleep or tied up.

6. Kitchen. This chamber is identical in size and shape to the entry room, and the ladder continues on up to the next level. This is Angwarnggaxx's slovenly kitchen. Scattered on the floor are pouches of cheese and dried meat stolen from travelers, a bag of nuts and berries (stolen from the local squirrels), a metal drinking cup used for a water basin, a small candle shoved into the wall for illumination as well as for roasting food, and a large rock and metal container for a chair and table. A shuttered window looks out the west wall.

7. Parlor. In this room are several more rocks serving as chairs, a tinderbox for a small end table, crossed knit-

ting needles hang on one wall, a small mirror next to them, and even a small velvet lined chest serves as a padded chair when opened. A belt pouch on the floor against one wall serves as a bed for Angwarnggaxx's pet rat Skwee.

It is here that incapacitated PCs are taken. Angwarnggaxx props them up against the wall or in the padded chair, then ties them securely with lengths of vine. He then returns to the fray, leaving the hapless PCs to their own devices should they regain consciousness. PCs may attempt to snap their bonds by making a successful bend bars/lift gates roll with a +15% bonus since the vines are old and weakened. PCs with the Rope Use proficiency may also escape and suffer only a –3 penalty instead of the usual –6.

The PCs are in no danger from Skwee, who is lying in his bed, as he is actually quite friendly, if a bit overweight. In fact, Skwee might be able to help the PCs if they have some food. Sniffing around their pouches, Skwee begins to gnaw at any that contain food. In his desire for treats, he may inadvertently chew through some of the vines holding the PCs. There is a 25% chance per round that this may happen, and if it does, the bound PC may attempt to snap his vines again with a +25% chance added to the initial 15% bonus for the weakened vines, giving the characters a +40% chance. Only PCs with food in their belt pouches gain Skwee's "help," but any rangers may use their animal empathy abilities to persuade Skwee to gnaw their vines. Skwee's gluttony may be his master's undoing and the PC's salvation.

8. Sleeping Quarters. This 2′ high chamber is Angwarnggaxx's sleeping quarters. Long ago, before the quickling moved in, this was the lair of a badger, but Angwarnggaxx drove it away by refilling its entry tunnel and connecting the hole to the trap door in the entry room (area 5). A small red blanket forms a carpet on the hard dirt floor, and a bundle of furs in the corner make a bed. Green glowing moss lines the walls and ceiling.

9. Garden. This chamber is also about 2′ high, but the floor is 4′ lower. Angwarnggaxx keeps a garden of mushrooms and roots here for times when food is scarce. The mushrooms are of the normal size and variety and are quite safe to eat. In the center of the room and lashed to pitons pounded into the floor is a small metal flask filled with water. This is actually a small *decanter of endless water* which Angwarnggaxx took from an old victim. He uses its "stream" power to water the garden and has made sure it is securely held in place so as not to tip over and flood his quarters. The command words for the *decanter's* powers of stream, fountain, and geyser are, respectively, *aquis, hydrae,* and *oceana*. Obviously, using anything stronger than the stream function of the *decanter* could have disastrous consequences in these small spaces. The southern passageway leads to a ladder going up into the treasure room (area 10) in the yellow mushroom.

10. Treasure Room. This circular chamber is about 4′ in diameter and 3′ high. The ladder continues up to the storage room (area 11). Heaped about the floor are piles of gold and silver coins. There are 250 gp and 300 sp. In all, it makes a considerable pile that Angwarnggaxx loves to lounge in. Additionally, there are two large rubies worth 200 gp and 100 gp and three small sapphires worth 50 gp each. A pouch contains three doses of *dust of growth*, which functions exactly like a potion of the same type. Angwarnggaxx has no use for the *dust*, as he prefers small places where his enemies cannot easily follow him. A scroll pilfered from an elven mage contains the following spells: *feather fall, find familiar, wall of fog, spectral hand,* and *melf's acid arrow*. There is even a *short sword +2* that would make a two-handed sword for the quickling, but he prefers his trusty dagger. All these things are easily accessible to small beings, but they must be dug out by full-size PCs. Digging them out takes several hours, and Angwarnggaxx does not take kindly to anyone destroying his house. If he and his spiders have been dispatched, then the PCs are in no danger.

11. Storage Room. This room has the same dimensions as the treasure room, but is heaped with food and tools instead of treasure. There are several small wheels of cheese, piles of acorns, and stacks of dried meat—all quickling-sized. Leaning against the wall are several human-sized forks and spoons (used as shovels) and a small lantern filled with oil. This warms up the quicklings sleeping quarters on cold winter nights when there is no one around to annoy.

Concluding the Adventure

If Angwarnggaxx manages to defeat the PCs, he takes all their valuables and puts them in his treasure room, where he spends days giggling over them. If he has captured any PCs and they have failed to escape, he keeps them around for a while. If he has any items of theirs which require command words to activate, he offers to release his captives in exchange for the knowledge, though they will still be shrunken. If the captured PCs can offer nothing in exchange for their lives, then Angwarnggaxx feeds them to his pet spiders (if they are still alive). If the spiders have been killed, Angwarnggaxx takes the bound PCs to a nearby owlbear den and leaves them there.

If the fight turns into a standoff, Angwarnggaxx tries to use hostages to bargain for items or knowledge. At the least he demands that the PCs leave at once, never to return. After all, they were uninvited guests and have already caused him enough trouble.

Should the PCs win, then they may investigate the mushrooms at their leisure. PCs shrunk by the *dust of diminution* can freely explore the mushrooms and discover the treasure room and its contents. Full-size characters can dig up and topple the mushrooms if they are determined enough, and may cut them open in order to reveal the inner chambers. All this takes quite a bit of time and effort, and the noise likely attracts a few wandering monsters.

Further Adventures

The drow from the nearby raiding tunnels send out a patrol in a few days to find out why Angwarnggaxx has not reported to them, and they may encounter the PCs digging up his lair. This event is recommended only if the PCs had an easy time defeating the quickling. Should the PCs learn of the drow and their raiding station, this discovery opens the door for some very interesting underground adventures if the PCs infiltrate the lair of the sinister dark elves. Should the drow miss the PCs by a few days, they send patrols out to discover who destroyed their scout's outpost, and the local wood elves may contact the PCs to enlist their help in repelling the impending drow invasion. Ω

creates dust cloud of 30-yard radius, blinding all creatures within and preventing spell-casting); SD aura of fear, 30-yard radius (save vs petrification at –8 penalty; failure means victims fight at –2 to attack and damage); MR 30%; SZ G (75′ body, 68′ tail length); ML 16; XP 16,000.

Spell-like powers (at 14th level of magical ability): *water breathing* (at will); *plant growth, suggestion* (1/day); *warp wood* (3/day)

Spells learned (as 14th-level mage): *affect normal fires, cantrip, charm person, friends, hold portal; blindness, blur, detect good, locate object, scare; clairaudience, dispel magic, fireball, hold person, Monster Summoning I; confusion, fire charm, plant growth, polymorph other; airy water* (×2), *animate dead* (×2), *chaos* (×2), *distance distortion* (×2); *anti-magic shell, ensnarement; control undead.*

Briocht wears a ring of *polymorph self* with which he tricked the wizard, Ocras. His doubled-up 6th-level spells are due to Ocras's *staff of wizardry*.

Ending the Adventure

If the adventurers quickly discover the location of the *helm* and decide to leave immediately, the DM should introduce Briocht to them in *polymorphed* form so that they have a chance at least to discover that some person purporting to be Ocras lives at the mansion. They may hear later that rumors of a dragon are circulating in the area, and may find it necessary to aid the tribe in fighting off the attentions of the redoubtable Briocht.

If the party escapes from the mansion but discovers that Briocht is in fact a dragon, the monster has no option but to pursue them. If magical means (such as a mass *teleport* to Abhainn Órga) puts them out of his reach, he retreats for a time to the deep woods and his assault on the valley is delayed by some months, while he assesses the defenses the chieftains may put in place given the party's news.

If the adventurers kill Briocht and bring back proof of his demise to Magg O'Cilligh, they are considered great heroes in the land. They should be awarded experience points for defeating the monster and (if *Celts Campaign* rules are used) 8 Enech points to be divided between the slayers. The DM may wish to award Enech points for monsters slain in the rest of the module, remembering the +1/2,000 XP formula given in the *Celt's Campaign Sourcebook*.

Further Adventures

PCs operating in a Celtic campaign who discover (and presumably read) the book detailing Magg's purchase of the *helm* may be suspicious of his motives, especially if they are still in the area when news of the gift-giving to Turl Ui Riada takes place. They know that the item was not part of Magg's own treasury and may use this information to their own benefit later.

Magg is anxious to keep the origin of the *helm of invulnerability* quiet, concentrating on the death of the dragon at any feast in the party's honor; or receiving them in his private quarters if they have the *helm* alone.

This may make the PCs suspicious, the more-so when Magg's household celebrates their chieftain's winning of the feud by giving his neighbor "an heirloom of his house," which cannot be matched. Magg presses the adventurers to continue on their journeys, and they may choose to visit with the Ui Riadas for a while to see what becomes of the two tribes.

A separate adventure may be contrived whereby Magg's deception can be revealed. Magg must explain himself before the whole tribe, any case brought against him for dishonor requiring the PCs as witnesses. Faced with severe censure, the chieftain lies through his teeth, trying to cast doubt on the PCs. If Magg is deposed, Nial, his nephew, may take over as tribal leader, or someone sympathetic to the Ui Riada tuath may be installed.

The Ardan Woods or their inhabitants may fuel new adventures, as may the gadaithe encountered at the start of the scenario. The DM may also introduce foreign PCs to the activities and culture of the Celtic lands using adventures connected with the O'Cilligh or Ui Riada tribes. Ω

Catalog
Write for your free catalog of games and gaming supplies! In the United States and Canada, write to: TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop, c/o TSR, Inc., 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: TSR Mail Order Catalogue, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. Send for it today!

GRAVE CIRCUMSTANCES

BY BILL SLAVICSEK

It's just one troll...

Artwork by Stephen A. Daniele

Bill is a staff designer and editor at TSR. His most recent projects include Harbinger House, *an adventure for the* PLANESCAPE™ *setting;* The Nightmare Lands, *a* RAVENLOFT® *boxed set; and the* DARK SUN® *campaign revision and expansion boxed set. This adventure is for use with the latter, exploring a northern region revealed for the first time in the new boxed set.*

"Grave Circumstances" is an AD&D® adventure set in the DARK SUN campaign world. Ideally, the DM has a copy of the new campaign revision and expansion boxed set to reference, but the adventure can also be used by those still using the original campaign set. Other materials needed for all DARK SUN adventures include the core rules books (*Player's Handbook* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*), and *The Complete Psionics Handbook* or the *Way of the Psionicist* from the new boxed set.

This adventure takes 3–6 player characters of 5th–7th level into the unexplored area north of the Tyr Region. Initially, the PCs go in search of forgotten city-states rumored to lie at the end of the road out of Draj, but they quickly become caught up in events that lead to even stranger discoveries.

If characters are of higher level, the DM may adjust the encounters accordingly. For example, the DM can substitute stronger monsters for weaker ones, boost the villains' levels, and increase the number of foes in a particular encounter—all without changing the basic elements of the story.

Adventure Setting

"Grave Circumstances" is set in the Year of Desert's Fury of the 190th King's Age. That's Free Year 11 to the people of Tyr. Four months or so ago, the Great Earthquake rumbled through the Tyr Region and the events of *The Cerulean Storm* novel unfolded. Sorcerer-kings have fallen, governments have toppled, and a series of natural disasters continues to befall the Tyr Region, leading to unparalleled turmoil. Chaos and anarchy swirl in the power vacuums of Raam, Draj, and Balic, while Urik, Nibenay, and Gulg close their gates and wait to see what other disaster will strike the Tablelands. Even Tyr suffers, damaged by the earthquake and the ongoing tremors, and besieged by refugees fleeing the surrounding

villages to seek protection inside the city walls.

If any brave adventurers ever had desires to see what lies beyond the Tyr Region, now would be an excellent time to travel. Perhaps the troubles of recent months don't extend beyond the seven city-states. Perhaps a better land waits on the far side of the next sand dune, or through that newly opened mountain pass . . .

Adventure Background

Three small merchant houses (Terg, Voyan, and Shakktur) joined forces to create the Dedys Consortium. Originally, the Consortium was formed to protect the small houses from the larger House Tsalaxa. Today, it remains a competitive trading group that turns a healthy profit but in no way approaches the size of Tsalaxa. The Consortium leaders hope that this is about to change.

Most people of the Tyr Region consider rumors of lost city-states to the north as nothing more than legends and caravan tales. The Dedys Consortium, however, believes that Merchant House Tsalaxa's prosperity can be partially attributed to their dealings with these northern city-states. The rival merchant dynasties of Draj are both seeking to increase their wealth and influence since the death of King Andropinis. The merchant lords of the Dedys Consortium believe that their best chance is to establish their own ties with the north. That's where the PCs come in.

The Dedys Consortium hires the PCs to journey north, find the lost city-states, present gifts and greetings from the Consortium, and return to describe the route and dangers that must be overcome along the way. The adventure begins when the PCs strike out for the northern reaches. They know that the road leading north out of Draj is the way to go. Shortly after they leave the territory depicted on the familiar map of the Tyr Region, the action erupts in savage fashion.

Long before the PCs reach the lost city-states, however, events to the north begin to affect them. Ravage, one of seven "Bandit States" that occupy the desolate Barrier Wastes north of the Tyr Region, is up in arms. Ravage's leader, Talid the Mul, has been robbed. As the adventure begins, Talid knows who robbed him—he just doesn't know where the thief has gone. To this end, bands of raiding teams from Ravage search the countryside for some sign of the thief's passing.

The thief is Esturren, an elf defiler who was a trusted member of Talid's community before he decided to steal from the bandit lord's coffers. Esturren stole "the Ivory Staff," an ancient artifact that Talid discovered during one of his infrequent trips into the depths of the Barrier Wastes.

From his first days in Ravage (and he'd been a member of the tribe for many years), Esturren could remember Talid telling stories about discovering the Ivory Staff. The tales told of Talid's harrowing journey to the bottom of Troll Grave Chasm, a huge crater that divides the two distinct portions of the Barrier Wastes. At the bottom of the crater, the desert above gives way to scrub plains and then an extensive mud flat. It's here that Talid's tale turns frightening—and extremely interesting to Esturren.

In the mud flat, Talid found ancient ruins full of spectacular treasure. The problem was that strange monsters haunted the area, and it took a combination of skill and luck for him to escape the crater with his life. All he could retrieve was the Ivory Staff—one of dozens of similar artifacts hidden in a chamber among the ruins.

After years of surreptitiously studying the Ivory Staff, Esturren finally learned enough to confirm his suspicions. The Staff was a "page" from an ancient spell book. If Talid's tale was even partially true, then more of these Ivory Staff "pages" were waiting in the mud-flat ruins. The defiler slowly worked up the courage to defy his bandit lord, promising himself great power and unlimited arcane knowledge once he found the ruined library. Besides, if Talid wasn't bright enough to realize what he had, then maybe he wasn't the right person to lead the Bandit States. Maybe that honor should fall to Esturren.

The Northern Lands

Here's a brief overview of the territory where this adventure takes place. More details can be found in the newly expanded DARK SUN Campaign Set, but enough information is provided here to run this adventure.

The Road North

The road that leads east out of the city-state of Draj eventually turns north and follows the shore of the Silt Sea. It passes near the village of Ket, through Fort Ral, and on to the trade village of Azeth's Rest. Ket is a client village of Draj with substantial interests controlled by the merchants of House Tsalaxa, who also finance Fort Ral, the Tyr Region's northernmost outpost. To most travelers, Fort Ral is the last bit of civilization before entering the unknown and savage regions to the north.

The trade village of Azeth's Rest is a walled community that charges travelers for the use of its services. Built around a lush oasis and protected by a legion of mercenaries, Azeth's Rest receives funding from House Azeth. This merchant house is connected to one of the so-called "lost" city-states of the north.

The Barrier Wastes

The desolate Barrier Wastes cuts across much of the northern region, forming a natural obstacle to direct travel. Extremely hot by day and terribly cold by night, the Barrier Wastes makes the worst regions to the south look like paradises by comparison. The land lacks water, and a constant wind blows out of the west to drive travelers mad. At most times, the wind sings or screeches across the wastes, scouring a traveler with hot sand until he begs for a moment's peace. Sometimes a great gust that can lift a person off the ground roars by. In those rare instances when the wind disappears, the sudden silence can be terrifying. The locals consider such a period of stillness to be an ill omen.

The Barrier Wastes consists of two distinct terrain types: the Glowing Desert and the Scorpion Plains.

The Glowing Desert is a large area of sandy wastes swept smooth by the near-constant wind. At night, the yellow sand particles glow with a cold and ghostly luminescence as bright as starlight. A huge wall of swirling sand, churned up where the western wind meets the southern breezes, marks the edge of the desert and separates it from the land nearest the Silt Sea. Five of the seven Bandit States occupy this portion of the Barrier Wastes, built around the few permanent oases in the desert. The village of Ravage can be found here.

The Scorpion Plains is an expanse of salt flats baked to ceramic hardness by

Alternate Beginnings

If the adventure background doesn't fit easily into your campaign, here are a few alternate suggestions.

- Perhaps the PCs possess a portion of the legendary *Wanderer's Chronicle* that details lost city-states along the northern coast of the Silt Sea. They decide to leave the turbulant Tyr Region to find a better life to the north.
- One of the remaining sorcerer-kings (either Hamanu of Urik, Nibenay, or Lalali-Puy of Gulg) wants to reestablish ties with the lost city-states. The sorcerer-king presses the PCs into service, giving them a magical message enchanted into a small stone that must be presented to the distant sorcerer-king.
- The opening has nothing to do with the lost city-states. Instead, a slave tribe chief sends the PCs north to present a message to Talid, leader of the village of Ravage. Talid, once a member of the tribe in question, promised to create a place of refuge and prosperity for all ex-slaves. Now the chief wants to take Talid up on his promise, especially due to the violent natural and political disasters rocking the Tyr Region.

the relentless heat of the sun. Great cracks slice across the hard ground, revealing mud flats hiding in the cooler shadows. Plants, swarms of insects, and a variety of small animals live in these muddy depressions. Many types of scorpions crawl from the depressions every night in search of food, giving the region its name.

Between the Scorpion Plains and the Glowing Desert lies a great canyon known as Troll Grave Chasm. The name harkens back to legendary creatures that were reportedly destroyed during the Cleansing Wars that preceded the Age of Sorcerer Kings. Sheer cliffs drop 500′ to a lush bed of scrub plains. The plains thrive with the greatest concentration of life in the Barrier Wastes; however, the chasm's reputation for mysterious creatures and deadly monsters give even the strongest bandit lords pause. In the center of the canyon, a mud flat stretches for many miles. If the scrub plains have a bad reputation, the mud flat has an aura of darkness and evil beyond anything imagined in the Tyr Region. Some tales even claim that the monsters called trolls still haunt the canyon's dark interior.

The Bandit States

Seven independent communities of raiding tribes occupy the Barrier Wastes. Collectively, they are known as the Bandit States. Each state controls a village built around a permanent oasis in the Glowing Desert or the Scorpion Plains. Outlaws, ex-slaves, and other outcasts populate the Bandit States, and a powerful, charismatic leader commands each community.

The members of these tribes are rugged, violent men and women of various races. Those who regularly experience the wrath of the bandits believe that the constant wind that blows through the Barrier Wastes has driven the bandits insane. There may be some truth to this sentiment.

Battle-lust runs through the veins of every bandit raider. When not fighting each other for territory, to gain prestige, or for the simple thrill of battle, the bandits raid caravans and settlements in the lands surrounding the Barrier Wastes. They sweep out of the Wastes on swift riding beasts and strange sail carts, striking fast and disappearing quickly back through the wall of swirling sand.

Part One: On the Road

The adventure begins as the PCs strike out in search of the lost city-states of the north (or whatever alternate beginning you provide that gets them moving in that direction). After a few encounters on the road, they reach the village of Azeth's Rest where they learn two things—there are city-states beyond the seven of the Tyr Region, and that raids by the bandits have increased in recent days. Use the map titled "North of the Tyr Region" when running this part of the adventure.

Whether the PCs go in search of the bandits or encounter them in a raid, the PCs become involved in the affairs of Talid of Ravage. Tales of the PCs' skills and exploits during their trip have reached Talid, and the bandit lord wants to acquire their help in solving his problem.

Encounters of the Road

The following encounters take place on the road to the north. They all occur during the last leg of the PCs' trip, happening some place between Fort Ral and Azeth's Rest. See the "North of the Tyr Region" map for more details.

Encounter 1: B'rohg Misunderstanding

The PCs come across three overturned cargo wagons and a few slaughtered kanks. Four b'rohgs are looting through the debris when the PCs arrive. B'rohgs are tall, slim, primitive giants with four arms and two legs. They stand 15′ tall, wear simple garb, and carry simple weapons. Read or paraphrase the following:

> You notice four figures sifting through the wreckage of a small caravan on the road ahead. At first the figures appear to be half-giants, but as you draw closer you notice the distinct second pair of arms that mark them as b'rohgs.
>
> The wrecked caravan consists of three overturned wagons and six dead kanks. You don't see traders anywhere—living or dead—but it's obvious that the b'rohgs are plundering the remains of the caravan.

The b'rohgs didn't attack this caravan. They found it in its present condition and decided to salvage whatever they could from the remains. They don't know who attacked the caravan or what happened to the traders, but they view the PCs as thieves trying to steal their salvage.

Unless the PCs make an extreme effort to leave the road and give the b'rohgs a wide berth, the four-armed giants respond with hostility. They found the caravan in this condition, and they don't want to share its contents with any scavengers or thieves. Of course, the PCs may think that the b'rohgs attacked and destroyed the caravan, which could lead to battle in any event.

The dim-witted b'rohgs aren't stupid, just primitive and slow to reach conclusions. If the PCs come within 40′ of the wreckage, the b'rohgs respond by tossing boulders and spears. Each b'rohg has one boulder and two spears. If the PCs get closer, the b'rohgs take up four stone clubs each and engage in melee combat. They fight to the bitter end.

If the PCs examine the caravan, they'll notice that the b'rohgs have only begun to loot the wagons. A closer inspection reveals that the kanks have been dead for at least a half a day, for scavengers have already been gnawing on their battered corpses. Any hero who makes a successful Wisdom check with a –2 penalty also notices that the

wounds were made with sharp, well-crafted blades—not the blunt clubs used by the b'rohgs. Two of the wagons bear the banner of the Merchant House Tsalaxa, though the third wagon's banner is missing.

The best course is for the PCs to leave the b'rohgs to their treasure. If a fight does break out, at least one of the b'rohgs tries to escape to spread the story of how the PCs defeated them. If the PCs spared the b'rohg, the story takes on more legendary proportions.

The wild muls described in Encounter 2 are the ones who attacked the caravan.

B'rohgs (4): INT low; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 5+3; hp 26, 24, 22, 19; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d6+4 (stone clubs); SA +6 damage bonus due to Strength, hurl rocks (1d10+6 damage), spear (1d6+6); SZ H (15′ tall); ML 10; XP 650; DARK SUN MC Appendix: *Terrors of the Desert* (*TotD*).

Psionics Summary: AC 6

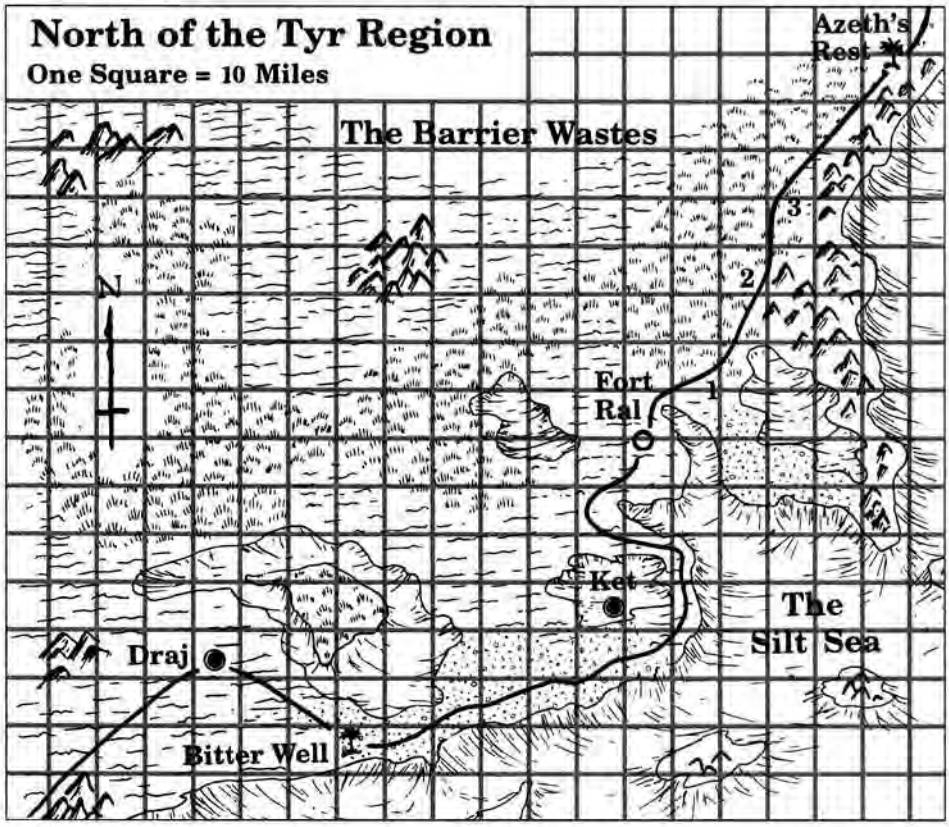
Encounter 2: Wild Mul Raiders

A few miles farther north, the PCs see a battle in progress. Raiders have attacked a group of travelers, though it appears that the travelers aren't the easy targets they probably seemed to be when the raiders made their move.

> A savage band of wild muls circles around two riders atop frightened crodlus, shouting and swinging weapons as though involved in some bloody game. The muls have no mounts, but instead run around the riders on their own powerful legs. The crodlu riders are purple-skinned humanoids who apparently took down at least one of the muls, for you can see a single raider lying face down in the dust.

The raiders are seven wild muls who banded together after escaping from Raam's slave pens in the wake of that city-state's recent troubles. There were eight in total, but one fell in this raid.

The muls have been engaged in one long series of raids as they work their way to the north. They've been terrorizing local settlements, travelers, and small caravans whenever they came across them. The wild muls are responsible for destroying the Tsalaxa caravan (see Encounter 1), and now they're busy harassing another pair of travelers as the PCs draw close.



The pair of travelers are nikaal traders. Members of a mysterious race of lizardlike humanoids, each nikaal has the purple scales and reptile eyes that set them apart from most other races. Few know where the nikaals travel to or from, but this pair were minding their own business when the wild muls attacked. If the PCs do nothing, the nikaal traders are overwhelmed before long, though the wild muls lose one more of their number in the battle.

If the PCs take a closer look, they'll notice that the largest of the muls wears a House Tsalaxa banner across his chest like a badge of honor. The banner matches those the PCs saw on the wagons in the previous encounter, and each of the muls carries at least one pack with the same seal branded into it.

The PCs can get involved and attempt to aid the nikaals, or they can travel on without lifting a weapon against the wild muls. If they decide not to help the nikaals, the PCs are attacked by the six remaining wild muls sometime after they stop to rest. This should occur before the events depicted in Encounter 3, below.

If the PCs attack now, they can defeat this raiding band, make a name for themselves in this northern territory, and receive a reward from the nikaal traders. The reward consists of a ceramic coin with the mark of House Azeth which the nikaals explain grants the PCs free access to the trade village of Azeth's Rest, and 25 ceramic pieces for each of the PCs.

If the PCs do come to the rescue of the traders, the largest of the muls shouts at them, his voice filled with rage and hatred as he spins his deadly lotulis. A lotulis is a long shaft with crescent blades at both ends.

> "We fought our way out of Raam!" the huge mul bellows. "We earned our freedom! If we want to plunder these traders, what business is it of yours? You should just be thankful that we don't turn our attention toward you!"

Wild Muls (7 or 6): INT average; AL NE; AC 8 (carru leather); MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 41 (leader), 37, 33, 32, 30, 27, 26; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (lotulis) or 1d8+1 (stone long sword); SA +1 damage bonus due to Strength; SZ M (6–7′ tall); ML Steady (12); XP 270; MC/*TotD*.

Psionics Summary: Dis 2/Sci 2/Dev 7; PS 13; PSPs 40 Att: MT, EW; Def: MBk, TS

Player's Option: #AT 1; MTHAC0 18; MAC 8

Psychokinesis: *Sciences*—project force; *Devotions*—levitation, control body.

Telepathy: *Sciences*—mindlink; *Devotions*—contact (conceal thoughts), ego whip (inflict pain), mind thrust (invincible foes), mind blank (invisibility), thought shield (send thoughts).

Nikaal Traders (2): INT average; AL CN; AC 8; MV 10; HD 3; hp 19, 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1d6+1 (bone short swords) or 1d4/1d4 (claws); SA acid spit (2d4 damage, once every third combat round, save vs. breath weapon for half damage); SZ M (6′ tall); ML Steady (11); XP 175; *DSMC II*/74.

Psionics Summary: Dis 1/Sci 1/Dev 3; PS 7; PSPs 20; Att: PsC; Def: MB

Player's Option: #AT 1; MTHAC0 20; MAC 8

Telepathy: *Sciences*—mindlink; *Devotions*—contact (ESP), sight link, psychic crush (sound link).

Encounter 3: The Ghost Caravan

This encounter takes place at night, after the PCs have finished traveling and set up camp to rest. The dawn will break over the horizon soon, bringing with it the unbearable heat of the day. Before that, it will also bring an undead horror that could destroy the PCs before they reach the village of Azeth's Rest.

> As you begin to spiral into sleep, a strange noise comes to you as if from some great distance. You listen, and it reminds you of chewing, as though something or someone was eating extremely loudly beyond the light of your campfire. These chewing noises are interrupted by a great belch, which brings you fully awake. No sooner does the belch subside then the chewing starts again.

The creature producing these noises is a fael, an undead glutton that exists only to satisfy its ravenous appetites. If the PCs ignore these unnaturally loud sounds, allow them to fall back asleep if they want. Of course, they probably leave at least one member of their party awake to guard the camp. They meet the fael before too long.

If the PCs investigate the source of the sounds, proceed to the boxed text below. Bear in mind that some of the descriptions may need to be modified, depending on when the PCs decided to rest. If they've been traveling throughout the day (which isn't easy under Athas's blazing sun), then this encounter occurs in the dead of night. If they've been traveling at night, then the fael approaches them in the middle of the day as the PCs try to sleep. As the PCs strike out from camp to find the source of the chewing and belching sounds, read:

> Less than half a mile from your camp you come across a huge wagon-fortress parked on the side of the road. It wasn't there when you passed just before making your camp. There are no mekillots hitched to the giant wagon, and you don't see the beasts anywhere in the vicinity. In fact, the wagon doesn't look like it's moved in years.
>
> From this distance, the chewing and belching sounds are louder. They literally echo from the interior of the wagon-fortress. The pale glow of lantern light shines from an open window, and the occasional crash of a ceramic plate or mug punctuates a fierce round of chewing and belching.

If the PCs investigate, they can approach the open window or find another way into the wagon-fortress. If they turn away and return to their camp, the occupant of the wagon seeks them out a few hours later.

The first thing the PCs notice is that there are no guards or traders in or around the wagon. Except for the nauseating sounds of a rude feast taking place in one of the inner holds, the place seems deserted.

> Inside the lighted hold, a banquet table stretches from one wall to the other. Overturned chairs, toppled bowls, and the remains of several erdlus and other delicacies cover the table, the walls, and the floor. Sitting behind the table is a huge, bloated merchant lord. Food crumbs and spilled drink stain his rich robes, and his ample gut fills his lap almost to his knees.
>
> The merchant lord plunges his huge, beefy hands into steaming bowls of rice and ground carru, stuffing fistfuls of the food into his stained, constantly chewing mouth. As you watch, he consumes the contents of the three bowls in turn, belching loudly as he finishes one and tosses the empty bowl against the far wall. He notices you, turning his blank eyes in your direction. "Feed me!" he bellows around a mouthful of rice. "I need more food!"

This undead merchant lord is a fael, a crude creature with no manners and an all-consuming appetite. It has been gobbling up the spoiled contents of this wagon for weeks now, but the stores are almost depleted. It looks to the PCs to provide it with more food. The PCs must destroy the creature, convince it that they know where more food is and send it on its way, or provide it with enough food to keep its feast going a few days longer. Otherwise, it turns on them. The fael eats humans and demihumans if no other food sources are available.

If the PCs convince the fael to leave, the wagon-fortress rolls away without any visible means of locomotion. No slaves turn the massive wheels, no beasts of burden pull it along the jagged road. If they defeat the fael and want to search the wagon, they find the rotting remains of food that were originally destined for some marketplace along this road. They also locate the remains of the merchant caravan, men and women who died to satisfy the fael's unnatural hunger. While no usable food or water remains, the PCs can find sacks of ceramic and silver pieces totaling 32 gp in the wagon's holds.

If the PCs refused to leave their camp to discover the source of the noises, the fael seeks them out after it consumes the last of the food in the wagon. After all of the PCs (except for any guards) have fallen asleep, the fael approaches their camp. If the PCs have left food lying around, the fael goes straight for it and starts eating. If there isn't any food in sight, the creature approaches the guard or the nearest sleeping hero and shouts, "Feed me!" The hero so greeted can smell the stench of the creature's last meal on its breath, as well as the lingering smell of death and decay that belongs completely to the fael. The rest of this encounter proceeds as described above.

Fael: INT very; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 7+3; hp 34; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3 (fists)/2d6 (bite); SA If the bite causes 6 or more hp damage, there is a 25% chance that the victim's hand is bitten off; 9 or more hp damage, 25% chance that an arm or leg is bitten off; 12 hp damage, 25% chance that victim's head is bitten off (victim is automatically killed); SZ M (6′ tall); ML 15; XP 975; *DSMC II*/44.

Psionics Summary: MAC 10

Azeth's Rest

The walled community of Azeth's Rest is a trade village built around a lush oasis. A legion of 50 mercenaries protects the village and the road nearby. If the PCs received the ceramic coin from the nikaal traders, then they can enter Azeth's Rest for free. The coin also entitles them to one free use of the watering hole for themselves and their mounts, and one free meal at the village's inn. If the PCs don't have the coin, it costs 1 sp each to enter the village, and 2 cp for each riding animal. Water in the village costs 3 sp per tun (250 gallons).

When the PCs arrive, they find that their reputation has preceded them. Their encounters with the b'rohgs, the wild mul raiders, the nikaal traders, and surpisingly even the fael, have produced stories that have become almost mythical in the telling. In fact, a bard performing at the village inn sings a ballad based on the exploits of the PCs. Everyone wants to hear the PCs tell their own tale, and everyone wants to buy them a drink at the tavern.

If the PCs left no survivors to pass on the tales of their journey, then others they never noticed have brought the news to Azeth's Rest. The wilderness is alive with hermits, nomads, and others who have become experts at not being seen, as their lives depend on such skills. These types watched the events from hiding, then struck out for the trade village to tell what they witnessed.

A representative of House Tsalaxa approaches the PCs a few hours after they arrive at the village. He wants to thank them for avenging the destruction of the house's caravan by the wild muls. If the PCs have recovered anything of worth from the muls and turn it over to the representative, he rewards them with 10 gp each.

Of course, all of the positive attention also leads to some negative attention as well. Thieves or bandits in the village might try to rob the PCs, and village toughs might try to expand their reputations by challenging the PCs to battle. Run these kind of scenes as you see fit, but give the PCs some time to rest and recuperate before they head out to the next part of the adventure.

As the PCs explore the village, they learn the following from the people they interact with:

> "Lost city-states? Well, there are two city-states to the north, but they've always been in the same location as far as I can tell. Maybe it was you who was lost, and not the city-states, did you ever consider that?"

(Two city-state are located to the north, but they're beyond the scope of this adventure. See the new DARK SUN campaign setting for more details.)

> "You've never heard of the Bandit States? Where did you say you were from? Oh, that explains it. The Bandit States are raiding communities that hide in the Barrier Wastes. Most of the time, we only have to worry about the raiders once or twice every new moons. Recently, however, Talid's Ravagers have increased the frequency of their raids for some reason. Maybe the Angry Winds have finally driven them totally insane."

(Talid has his raiders looking for Esturren the Defiler.)

> "I hear that House Azeth is looking for some strong adventurers to go talk to Talid the Bandit Lord. I think the merchant house wants someone to convince the Ravagers to cut back on the frequency of their raids. I bet heroes like you could convince Talid with no trouble at all."

(If the PCs seek out an agent of House Azeth, she'll offer them 5 sp each to take a message to Talid of Ravage.)

> "If you're looking to make some silver, then go see Talid the Bandit Lord. I understand he has a problem that someone with your reputation should be able to solve in three shakes of a lirr's tail."

(Talid will hire the PCs to find Esturren. In fact, he's currently looking for them for just such a purpose, as their reputation has already reached the Bandit Lord's ears.)

At some point, it will be time for the PCs to leave Azeth's Rest. They can leave with an assignment from House Azeth, or they could go searching for Talid and the Ravagers for their own reasons, or they might simply continue their journey north. Whatever their final destination, they meet up with Talid the Bandit Lord.

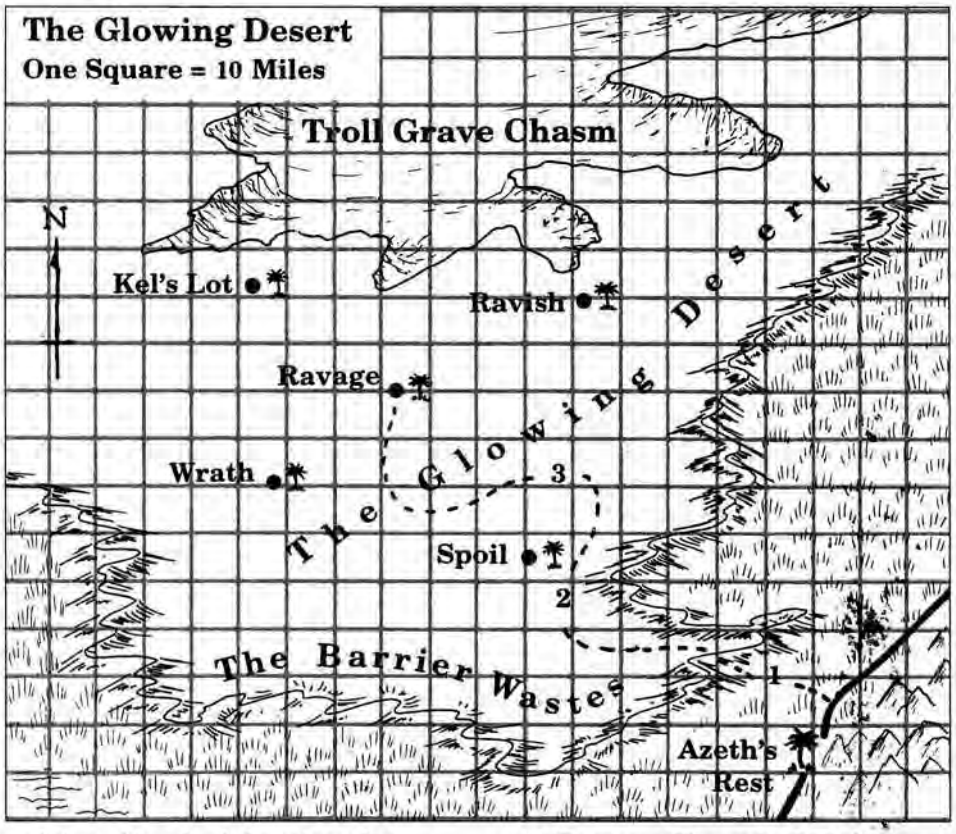
The Ravagers

If the PCs seek out the Ravagers, they have little trouble finding them. Talid has told his raiders to watch for the adventurers from the south, so they'll find the PCs before the PCs find them. If the PCs aren't interested in finding Talid, the Ravagers locate them anyway. The PCs run into the raiders just beyond sight of the walls of Azeth's Rest.

Whatever the situation, when the raiders appear, read the following:

> They appear out of the swirling wall of sand and dust that seems to hang constantly in the western sky. Almost two dozen men and women of various races, armed with vicious weapons and riding either kanks or strange wheeled vehicles with sails. Before you can take any overt actions, the raiders surround you.
>
> One of their number, a female elf with short hair and a savagely painted face, rides forward. "Are you the travelers who defeated the wild muls of Raam?" she asks. "Talid of Ravage would have words with you."

If the PCs attack the raiders, the raiders fight back with everything they have. The raiders do not attack to kill, but to knock the PCs unconscious. As the fight progresses, the female elf continues to ask the PCs to meet with Talid. She calls herself Mutalla. If the PCs agree to meet with Talid, Mutalla



and the raiders lead them into the Barrier Wastes.

Ravagers (22): INT average; AL LN; AC 8 (carru leather); MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 19 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (bone long sword) or 1d6 (long bow); SZ M (6′ tall); ML 12; XP 120.

Psionics Summary: MAC 9

Part Two: Into the Grave

The Ravagers lead the PCs into the Barrier Wastes to meet with the Bandit Lord, Talid the Mul. Along the way, they discover some of the hazards of traveling in this desolate region, including the hostile environment and raiders from other Bandit States. Use the map of "The Glowing Desert" when running these encounters.

After reaching the village of Ravage, the PCs are received by Talid. If the PCs agree to help the Bandit Lord (and Talid doesn't really give them any choice), he tells them what he knows of Esturren. At this point, scouts return with news that the defiler had been spotted to the north, moving in the direction of the Grave.

The rest of this part of the adventure involves the PCs' attempts to catch up with Esturren. The map of "Troll Grave Chasm" shows the defiler's route and includes encounters for the PCs as they pick up the defiler's trail. This part of the adventure concludes as the PCs prepare to follow the defiler into the vast mud flat at the bottom of the chasm.

Travel Encounters

Whether as prisoners or as invited guests, the PCs travel with the Ravagers into the Barrier Wastes. The first significant encounter takes place as the travelers reach the swirling wall of dust and sand that marks the border of the Barrier Wastes.

Encounter 1: The Wall of Dust and Sand

Where the western wind that blows across the Barrier Wastes meets the southern wind blowing toward the Silt Sea, the churning sand and dust rise into the air. This turbulence forms a thick, constantly moving wall of sand that hangs like fog at the edge of the Glowing Desert. As the PCs approach this location, read the following:

> In the distance you can see the wall of dust and sand. It looks like any sand storm blown up along the shores of the Silt Sea, except this one is even more massive. The wall of airborne sand stretches in both directions along the horizon for as far as you can see, and it rises almost a mile into the sky.
>
> "We're going through that," the female elf says with a grin. "I bet they don't have anything like this where you come from."

Movement and visibility in the wall of dust and sand is the same as in a driving sand storm (movement 10, spotted 10, type 5, ID 5, detail 3). The wall is relatively narrow, and even at the slower movement rate the raiders can lead the PCs through it in about two hours. As visibility and movement are hindered, this makes an excellent hunting ground for the pair of mastyrial that live in the nearby desert.

One of the scorpionlike creatures attacks the raiders, the other goes for the PCs and Mutalla. The two groups get divided in the initial attack and can't locate each other until the threat has been dealt with. The raiders have the same level of success as the PCs. If the PCs are winning, so are the raiders. If the PCs are losing, the raiders lose as well. To determine how many of the raiders fall in the unseen battle, roll 1d4 for every 15 hp damage inflicted on the PCs; subtract the die roll from 24. The final total is how many raiders remain. The DM should run Mutalla during this encounter. She does her best to fight alongside the PCs.

If one mastyrial is reduced to fewer than 12 hit points, both creatures tunnel into the sand to wait for weaker prey.

Mastyrials (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 0; MV 15; HD 12; hp 48 each; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (pincers)/2d6 (bite)/1d6 (tail); SA poison (if tail hits, save vs. poison or sustain 30 hp damage, 15 if saved); SD regenerate (3 hp per round), immune to blunt weapons; SZ M (6′ long); ML 11; XP 8,000; *DSMC II*/68.

Psionics Summary: MAC 7

Encounter 2: Attack of the Spoilers

The PCs, led through the Glowing Desert, wander into an ambush set by the raiders of the bandit state of Spoil.

The Glowing Desert looks like every stretch of sandy waste you've ever trekked through, though the sand dunes seem flatter and the western wind is unnaturally constant. Yellow sand can be seen in all directions, and the heat of the day is as hot as anywhere on Athas. Then a parcel of sand begins to move!

"Ambush!" shouts one of the Ravagers. "Spoilers!" warns another.

You see them now, a dozen men and women rising out of the sand with weapons at the ready and a hungry glow in their eyes.

There are 12 spoilers waiting in ambush. They emerge to talk if the Ravagers outnumber them, but immediately attack if the Ravagers have been reduced to less than 12 in number.

If talking is their goal, the Spoiler leader, a huge one-eyed tarek, demands payment from the Ravagers if they want to pass through Spoiler territory unharmed. He demands 1 gp for each member of the traveling band. Mutalla looks to the PCs with some amusement, asking them what they would do in this situation. She then follows whatever suggestion they make. If the price is paid, the band can continue traveling. If not, the Spoilers engage them in battle. They continue to fight until only four remain, then the ambushers flee.

If attack is the immediate response, the Spoilers seek to capture and kill the travelers so that they can plunder their bodies. As in the above scenario, the Spoilers flee after they've been reduced to only four healthy warriors.

Spoilers (12): INT average; AL LN; AC 8 (carru leather); MV 12; HD 3+2; hp 19 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (bone long sword) or 1d6 (long bow); SZ M (6' tall); ML 12; XP 120.

Psionics Summary: MAC 9

Encounter 3: Sand Howlers

The last encounter before the PCs reach Ravage takes place when the raiders stop to unveil a hidden cache of supplies. This depot is like many scattered throughout the Barrier Wastes by the Bandit States, hidden beneath the sand but full of food, water, and other supplies needed in the hostile environment.

As supplies are passed around, have the PCs make Wisdom checks with –6 penalty to determine if they hear the warning howls over the constant wind. If any PCs make the check, they hear a series of terrible howls from not too far away. If none of the PCs succeed, the howlers attack with surprise on their side.

Sand howlers are lizardlike creatures that bear some resemblance to dogs. Their oversized heads support many eyes, and they have large, yellow tusks. There are six howlers in this pack. Three attack the PCs and Mutalla, while the other three attack the remaining Ravagers. As before, for every 15 hp damage the PCs sustain, roll 1d4 to determine how many Ravagers fall. The sand howlers battle to the death.

Sand Howlers (6): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+2; hp 28, 28, 22, 22, 16, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3 (claws)/1d6 (bite); SA paralyzing gaze (if a character looks into a howler's many eyes, save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds); SZ M (4' long); ML 8; XP 420; *DSMC II*/90.

Psionics Summary: MAC 6

The Village of Ravage

The well-fortified village of Ravage resembles a large trade village more than a struggling community of ex-slaves. Inside its high walls, Ravage is a piece of lush, fertile ground in the middle of a desolate desert. After the PCs arrive, they are taken directly to Talid's pavilion.

The pavilion is constructed of worked stone and brick, and it stands beside the large pond that gives this oasis life. When the PCs arrive, they immediately notice Talid the Bandit Lord. The large, powerfully built mul wears a white tunic that shines against his bronze flesh. A rare metal sword hangs at his side. Read the following:

"Welcome to Ravage, greatest of the Bandit States," Talid says in a strong, clear voice. "We have heard of your adventures, and this ex-gladiator has only one question. Are the tales true?"

The PCs must consider this question very carefully. Talid wants the PCs for their skills. If they claim that the stories have been exaggerated, then Talid might decide to cast them back into the desert. On the other hand, if they agree that the tales are true, they are forced to take on whatever task Talid has in mind for them.

If the PCs hesitate in their response, the raiders who accompanied them from Azeth's Rest begin to tell all that happened during the trip across the Glowing Desert. Talid listens, nods his appreciation, then shouts, "Leave us! I will talk to these adventurers alone!"

Talid tells the PCs everything from the background (although he doesn't know that the staff was part of an ancient spell book). "Will you find Esturren for me?" he finally asks. Before they can answer, a dusty, weary raider approaches.

"I'm sorry to interrupt, Talid," the weary raider says, "but we've spotted Esturren. We caught up with him north of the village, but he used his magic to destroy the hunting party. I was the only one who survived. He's heading north, Talid. He's heading toward the Grave."

Talid stands, a look of terrifying anger crossing his face. "I should have guessed he'd go there."

If the PCs agree to go after Esturren, Talid promises them a healthy reward and the eternal friendship of the Ravagers. If they ask what the reward is, a scowl crosses the bandit lord's face. "Do you question my honor? Return when the job is done and you won't be disappointed." Talid wants Esturren alive and the staff returned. He'll take the staff and a dead body if need be, however.

After the discussion comes to an end, Talid directs the PCs north toward the Troll Grave Chasm.

Note: If the PCs were hurt in the battles in the desert, Talid's water clerics can cast spells to help restore lost hit points. There are three clerics in Ravage. The first has two *cure serious wounds* and three *cure light wounds* to spare on the party. The other two clerics have three *cure light wounds* each. If the PCs agree to help Talid, the bandit lord commands his clerics to provide what healing they can for the party.

Encounters in the Grave

Refer to the map of "Troll Grave Chasm" when running this portion of the adventure.

Encounter 1: Esturren's Camp

The PCs first come across the defiler's camp. This is the same location that Talid's hunting party came across, and the PCs can see the remains of Esturren's foes scattered in the sand. Read:

> Carrion birds lift into the air as you approach the remains of a small camp. Bodies lie here and there, the life sucked out of them by terrible magical forces. The dead look much like the members of Ravage that you have come to know. You see no signs of life here, just a cold fire pit and the dead raiders.

The PCs find five bodies. Three died from massive burns, one from five small, circular scorch marks, and the fifth from a dagger in the back. Other than the fire pit and the bones from a small lizard that must have been the defiler's last meal at this camp, there isn't anything else here to find besides the two sets of tracks. One set leads back toward Ravage and must belong to the scout. The other set heads off toward the north.

Encounter 2: False Path Down

Esturren made his first attempt to descend into the Grave at this cliffside. He hammered a spike into the rock and tossed a long length of giant-hair rope into the chasm. He quickly realized that such a climb was beyond his physical abilities, so he abandoned the spot and continued to search along the ridge for an easier path down. If the PCs make a tracking proficiency check or a Wisdom check with a –6 penalty, they notice that the defiler's tracks continue to the east. Otherwise, they may try to scale the cliff at this location.

The rope drops 100′ into the chasm. The PCs must provide the method for descending the final 400′ to the floor of the chasm. Because the rock face is so vertical and smooth, even using mountaineering gear is difficult. The base success rate is only 10%. Those with the mountaineering proficiency can add 10% per slot. A check must be made every 100′.

For more details about determining the success of climbing checks, see Chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*.

About 250′ down, a creature that lives in the cliff emerges to try to make a meal of the PCs. It's a megapede, a

colossal centipede that can climb across the rock face without any problem. However, as it needs all its legs to maintain its grip, the megapede can attack with only its mandibles.

Megapede: INT animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 10; hp 56; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3d10 (bite); SA poison (save vs. poison or suffer 20 additional hp damage; those who save suffer only 1d3 additional points); SZ G (100′ long); ML 11; XP 4,000; *TotD*.

Psionics Summary: MAC 6

Encounter 3: True Path Down

Esturren descended into the chasm at this point. Here, a narrow ledge leads down like a natural staircase. The PCs can easily walk to the bottom from this location. They must walk in single file, however, for the narrow ledge isn't wide enough to allow a double row. There are no hidden menaces on this path—unless the PCs have been having too easy a time and the DM feels they need to be tested a bit more.

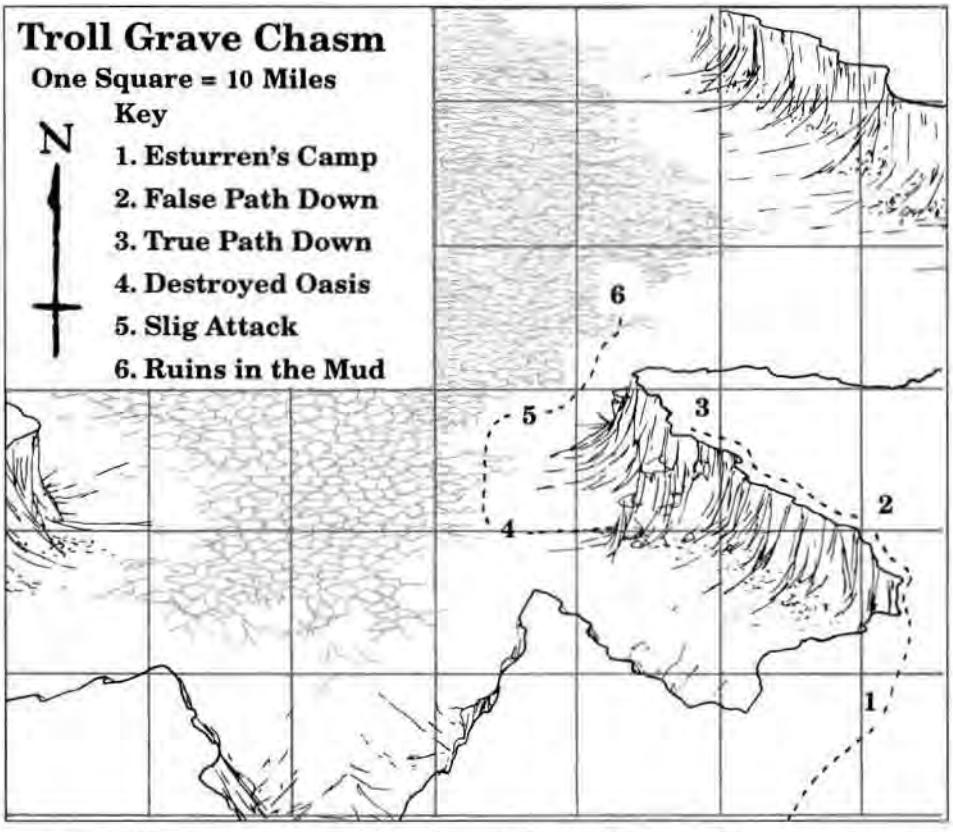
If the heroes find this path, read or paraphrase the following:

> You almost miss the narrow path that gently descends into the Grave. Scuff marks and a portion of the boot print in the dust help you determine that the defiler stepped off the edge here. Glancing over the side, you see a narrow ledge of rock that slants down the cliff face like a staircase. You've found Esturren's path down.

Encounter 4: Destroyed Oasis

A massive scrub plain spreads across the floor of the chasm. Compared to the desert above, the scrub plain appears as a lush oasis full of life and vitality. As the PCs continue to follow Esturren's trail, they find that not everything in the Grave is alive. They reach what was once a teeming oasis. Now it's been reduced to withered plants, ashen soil, and foul water.

> The land ahead was once lush and beautiful, an oasis of such beauty to rival anything in the Tyr Region. Now, however, the place has been defiled. The same magic used by the sorcerer-kings was at work here, drawing life and energy out of the plants, the water, the very soil. Dried husks and dead leaves are all that remain of the once-living grove. The soil, once rich and brown, has turned to gray ash.



Esturren used this oasis to provide power for his defiling magic. He wanted to fill up his magical energy reserves before heading into the mud flat, and this oasis was the most abundant in the area. He defiled with wild abandon, sucking the life out of the land with no regard to the consequences. Even the oasis pool has been corrupted, and now its water is bitter and tepid. The PCs find his trail on the far side of the oasis, heading toward the massive mud flat at the center of the Grave.

Encounter 5: Slig Attack

Before the PCs reach the mud flat, they must get past a party of slig warriors. Sligs are wide-jawed, tall, muscular humanoids with sickly white skin and reptile eyes. They adopt a hunched posture that allows them to use their arms when they travel.

This particular band of sligs hunts the chasm floor. The sligs have been following the PCs since they descended into the chasm, and have set a trap for them some distance from the dead oasis. Read the following:

> Esturren's trail leads past a shallow depression. In the shallow pit, you can see a large chest and a scattering of metal coins. The defiler's tracks continue toward the mud flat at an even pace, as though he never noticed the treasure at the bottom of the pit.

If the PCs ignore the trap, the sligs decide to rush them. The sligs hate to lose the advantage of the trap, but they hate to lose their prey even more. The sligs attempt to kill one or two of the PCs and drag their bodies away. If five or more of the sligs fall, the remaining creatures flee.

If the PCs fall for the trap, they find a chest full of rocks and about eight silver coins scattered around it. Once they descend into the pit, the sligs attack. The sligs use the height provided by the pit to best advantage, attacking with chitin-tipped spears or bone long swords.

Sligs (8): INT average; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4+1; hp 32, 29, 28, 26, 23,

22, 20, 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+1 (bone long sword or spear) or 1d3 (bite); SZ L (7′ tall); ML 15; XP 420; *DSMC II*/98.

Psionics Summary: MAC 5

Part Three: The Defiler

The final portion of this adventure takes place in the mud flat that fills the central region of Troll Grave Chasm. In the mud flat, the PCs catch up with Esturren the Defiler in ancient ruins that date back to Athas's Green Age. The defiler isn't the only danger awaiting the PCs in the mud flat. A terrible creature—the last troll in all the world—rises from the mud to destroy those who would disturb his half-buried home.

Traveling Through the Mud

The scrub plains give way to a vast mud flat. A mud flat is an area where traces of water seep up through the ground to turn the surrounding dirt into mud. A lush jungle of bushes and small trees spring from this mud flat, filling the region with an abundance of plant, animal, and insect life. When the PCs approach the mud flat, read the following:

> The grass and scrub give way to a dark, foreboding jungle. The buzz of insects and the calls of strange beasts rise out of the jungle like living music, giving the place a sound reminiscent of places like the Forest Ridge. The depths ahead of you hold countless mysteries, numerous dangers, and the defiler you've been chasing since leaving the village of Ravage. To find him, you'll have to enter the jungle that springs from the mud.

Esturren's trail through the jungle isn't hard to follow. While any footprints are quickly swallowed up by the seeping water, the broken branches create a corridor through the vegetation. Any number of encounters can be placed along the jungle path, from deadly plants to fierce lizards, insect swarms to rabid tribes of humanoid monsters.

The only planned encounter takes place just before the PCs spot the ancient ruins. A pool of wet mud along the trail is home to a trio of mud fiends. These deadly creatures let the defiler pass by, but they can't resist a party as large as that of the PCs.

> The pool of watery mud beside the trail bubbles and stirs as you walk by. A moment later, three pillars of mud rise out of the pool to the height of a tall man. Arms and legs emerge from the pillars, and black, hollow eyes open to gaze upon you. Then a black, hollow mouth opens in the nearest creature, and a bubbling voice says, "We hunger!"

The mud fiends require decaying flesh to sustain their foul existence, and they want the PCs to become the latest fertilizer for their pool of mud. These creatures battle until reduced to 0 hp, at which point they collapse into a glob of mud that slowly slides back into the pool. In 2d6 days, the mud fiends can re-form at full strength.

Mud Fiends (3): INT low; AL NE; AC 7; MV 6; HD 6; hp 31, 29, 17; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (fists); SA smother (if both attacks hit, victim must save vs. paralyzation or be trapped in the creature's muddy form; each round that the victim doesn't make the save, he suffers 1d6 hp additional damage; once he saves, he pulls free of the mud); SD regenerate (back to full in 2d6 days), half damage from all nonmagical weapons; SZ M (6′ tall); ML 11; XP 975.

Psionics Summary: MAC 4

The Ancient Ruins

This encounter takes place at the location marked with a number 6 on the map of "Troll Grave Chasm." The PCs reach the ancient ruins without warning, bursting through some heavy undergrowth to emerge in a secluded clearing. There, half-buried in the mud, are a few stone buildings from an earlier age. Read the following:

> The vine-covered branches and canopy of leaves part to reveal a hidden clearing. In the center of the clearing, sticking partly out of the mud, is a series of stone buildings that look nothing like those in the city-states of the Tablelands. One building, decorated with white pillars and a massive stone door, sits mostly above the surface of the mud. The great stone door hangs open, revealing a narrow glimpse into the darkness beyond.

If the PCs watch for a few moments, they notice a ghostly light blaze through the narrow opening in the pillared building. The light is produced by a *light* spell that Esturren casts when he reaches the "library" of spell staves. How the PCs approach this encounter is up to the players, but here are the appropriate details to consider as this scene plays out.

1. The Pillared Building. What the PCs are looking at is the top floor of a three-story building. The lower two floors wait beneath the surface of the mud and are almost impossible to access. In the Green Age, this was one of the first centers of magical study. It was established by one of Rajaat's original preserver students. While paper wasn't rare in those days, the preserver still wanted to create a spell book that would survive the passing of ages. He inscribed the magical runes on a series of ivory staves and placed them in the top floor of this building.

Inside, the entire floor forms one gigantic chamber with 12′ high ceilings. An opening in the center of the chamber floor leads to stairs that descend into the building. The stairs, however, are buried in thick, clinging mud. The staves are set up in a series of banisters, with one staff equaling one spell in the book. There is one staff for every available spell in the DARK SUN campaign.

If the PCs enter the structure, they discover that the staves are protected by powerful wards. Touching a staff inflicts 1d10 hp damage on any good or neutral character, and 2d10 hp damage on any evil character. Actually pulling a staff free sets off a magical charge that inflicts 6d10 hp damage. (When Talid stole one of the staves, the resulting discharge of energy almost killed him.) Under no circumstances should the PCs be allowed to steal more than four of the staves (determine the spell each staff contains randomly).

If more than four staves are removed (not counting the one Talid removed), an overward discharges, plunging the entire building beneath the mud. It takes 1d10+8 rounds for the building to sink. Each round, any characters in the sinking building must make successful Dexterity checks at a –1 penalty to progress toward the exit. The checks grow harder each round, as geysers of mud bubble up to coat the floor. In round two, checks are at Dexterity –2, in round

3 at –3, and so on. A character must make a number of successful checks based on his base movement rate, as shown below:

Move	# of Successful Checks
20+	2
17–19	3
13–16	4
10–12	5
7–9	6
6 or less	7

Those who fail to escape the sinking building in time face drowning unless rescued by PCs who escaped. Drowning PCs can hold their breaths for a number of rounds equal to their Constitution scores rounded up.

2. Esturren the Defiler. Esturren sees his greatest dreams realized when he enters this building. The moment he becomes aware of the PCs, he flies into a rage and seeks to destroy them. He has his own memorized spells ready for just such a battle, plus he can call on the spell on Talid's staff if he is losing the fight. The spell inscribed on the staff is *finger of death.* If Esturren is forced to cast it, the runes fade from the staff and the spell is used up immediately. The staff spells work just like pages in a spell book: Copying a spell directly from a page causes the spell to vanish from the book.

The defiler refuses to give up this treasure and fights to the death unless the PCs can somehow render him harmless. If not, Esturren remains with the building even if it starts to sink into the mud. The PCs must knock him out, tie him up, and gag him if they want to carry him back to Talid in one piece. Of course, Esturren fights to keep that from happening.

Esturren has also discovered something important in the library chamber. In addition to representing pages in a spell book, the ivory staves serve another function. They can be used to cast a single spell that totally destroys the mud flat and surrounding scrub plain and turn the caster into a 30th-level dragon. Even the original preserver wasn't aware of this function, as it was added by his master—Rajaat the Warbringer. This huge, complicated, multi-staged spell defiles the entire region and transfers the power to the caster. Esturren wants to grasp that power. To assure his privacy, the defiler has tricked the last original denizen of this area to protect him, as described in the encounter below.

Esturren (male elf defiler): AL LE; AC 6 (Dexterity); MV 18; HD 9; hp 28; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+1 (bone dagger +1); S 13, D 19, C 9, I 18, W 11, Ch 15; SZ M (7′ long); ML 17; XP 4,000

Psionics Summary:

Wild Talent—displacement, PSPs 28, MTHAC0 16, MAC 4

Memorized Spells:

1st—*armor, burning hands, magic missile* ×2; *continual light, invisibility, mirror image; blink, fireball, lightning bolt; fire shield, shadow monsters; conjure elemental*

3. The Guardian of the Clearing. One last creature must be included in the final conflict. This monster is the last of the trolls, those ancient creatures that once walked Athas in great numbers until the abominations of the Cleansing Wars were visited on all the nonhuman races. This troll used his regenerative powers to stay alive, and the defiling energies unleashed on the Grave have given the creature something very close to immortality.

The creature looks like the trolls of old, except it's much larger. In addition, as the troll's fellows died in the war that destroyed this area, it took the severed parts of their bodies and attached

Continued on page 70

THE LAND OF MEN WITH TAILS

BY DAVID HOWERY

It's a jungle out there!

Artwork by Craig Huffman

David Writes: "The Land of Men with Tails" is my fourth adventure set in the Dark Continent (the others appear in DUNGEON® Adventures issues 15, 22, and 34). I've always used non-European settings in my campaigns, at various times using fantasy versions of Africa, Greenland, Vinland, Antarctica, pre-Columbian America, and Arabia. A little variety can help a campaign go far!"

This AD&D® adventure is for 4–6 PCs of levels 5–7 (about 30 total levels). It is a jungle wilderness adventure set on the same generic "Dark Continent" used for "The Elephants' Graveyard" (DUNGEON Adventures #15) and "The Leopard Men" (#22). The party should be well balanced, with at least two fighters and a priest with the ability to cast *cure disease* and *neutralize poison.* Adventurers with a wilderness background, such as rangers and druids, will be especially useful. The campaign background for the Dark Continent appeared in DRAGON® Magazine #189, along with special rules for adventuring in the tropics.

Several new MONSTROUS MANUAL™ pages appear at the end of the article. The hippo and froghemoth are from the original edition rules, so they are updated for this adventure. The utuchekulu first appeared in DRAGON Magazine #122 and has been expanded and modified here.

Players' Background

The PCs begin the adventure in Fort Thunder, a rough and rowdy town on the northern coast of the Dark Continent that serves as home to a mix of natives and foreigners from across the world. Adventurers in the fort must register with appropriate guilds (thieves, mercenaries, mages, etc.), and these connections lead them into the adventure. First, however, the PCs witness the return of a hunting party, as they move down the main road through the fort. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The road is full of people moving to and from the south gate, a colorful crowd of natives and foreigners. There are dozens of the people who create the business trade that the fort controls: hunters, spice gatherers, gold panniers, and more.

Suddenly, the crowd parts around a group of men coming through the south gate. They have all the signs of elephant hunters: heavy crossbows, light gear, and bearers carrying huge tusks. The hunters carry a corpse upon a stretcher. The dead man is covered with a blanket, but one arm has fallen free to show how he died—the flesh has the jaundiced look of those who die of fever. This is the cause of the crowd's fear, for fever is a common death for northerners who come to the tropics.

In front of the hunters walks a man who looks deeply worried.

The man leading the hunters is Lucian, an advisor to Arn Galter, the most powerful merchant in Fort Thunder. The hunters are also in his employment. They proceed directly to Galter's residence, where they report the failure of their mission. If the PCs attempt to halt or question Lucian or the hunting party, they are told only that the expedition met with "difficulties." The returning hunters refuse to speak more of their journey. Even if they press for more information, the PCs can learn nothing more at this time.

Later that day, on orders from Galter, Lucian makes inquiries through the guilds, seeking freelance adventurers for hire. The names of the PCs come up in the discussions, especially if they expressed an interest in the hunting party earlier. Lucian uses Galter's many contacts in the fort to find out where the PCs are staying, then he sends couriers to invite them to Galter's house. The couriers say only that Galter wishes to offer the PCs a job.

If they have been in Fort Thunder for any length of time, the PCs have heard of Arn Galter and know him to be a powerful merchant. His luxurious estate lies on the south edge of the fort's residential district.

When the PCs arrive at the estate, Lucian meets the couriers and PCs at the door. He dismisses the couriers and leads the PCs into Galter's council room.

The furnishings here are luxurious. A thick rug covers the floor, and tapestries hang on the walls. A large oak table stands in the room, a dozen chairs around it.

At the head of the table sits a large man holding his head in his hands, as if overcome by despair. Your guide bids you to sit, then he speaks softly to the other man. When the large man looks up, you see his face is pale and drawn, and his deep voice is rough and slurred.

"Greetings, and thank you for coming. I am Arn Galter, and this is Lucian, my chief supervisor. He has brought you here to consider my offer. First, let me tell you of my problem.

"You may have heard of my son, Korman. He came of age last year and spent much time thinking of his future. I wanted to teach him my business and prepare him for the day he would inherit it. However, Korman is young and stubborn, and he wanted to make a fortune of his own. The boy has always been fascinated by stories of treasure hordes hidden in the jungle. You know these rumors, three parts lies to one part misdirection. Korman is a gullible lad, and I had to keep him from chasing off after rumored wealth in a dozen locations. I was successful—until a few months ago, when he found an old map that supposedly led to one of these treasures.

"The map showed a lake far to the south of the fort. This lake lies in a place the natives call the Land of Men With Tails. I've heard many stories about this mysterious region, from both natives and explorers. What drew Korman's interest was an old story about a statue called the Muhalu. The legends say the statue is made of solid gold, but no one knows what it looks like. Korman's map shows that the Muhalu rests somewhere by that lake.

"My son gathered his friends to search for the Muhalu. He had a wild idea of exploring hundreds of miles of unknown jungle, finding the statue, and making his fortune by melting it down. Korman took only his five good friends: Bakar, Ortho, Memnon, Olvero, and Palance. With these men and a handful of supplies loaded on two burros, Korman set out to find his treasure.

"Perhaps you saw the body the elephant hunters brought in through the south gate today. The hunters work for me, and the dead man they found dying of fever in the jungle. He died before they could heal him. Not knowing what else to do, the hunters took the body here and reported to Lucian.

"Here is where the mystery begins. Lucian recognized the dead man as Bakar, one of Korman's companions. The hunters said that he was delirious and raving, babbling about 'golden Muhalu' and 'monsters in the ruins.' I don't know whether Korman found the Muhalu, but he and the others have vanished.

"Fortunately, Bakar had Korman's old map. As you may have guessed, I want you to take the map and find Korman, alive or dead. The journey will be dangerous, but I will make it worth your while, supplying you with any necessary food, gear, and goods. I will pay each of you 100 gp now and another 1,000 each on your return. If you bring back Korman or his body, I will pay each of you another 3,000 gp."

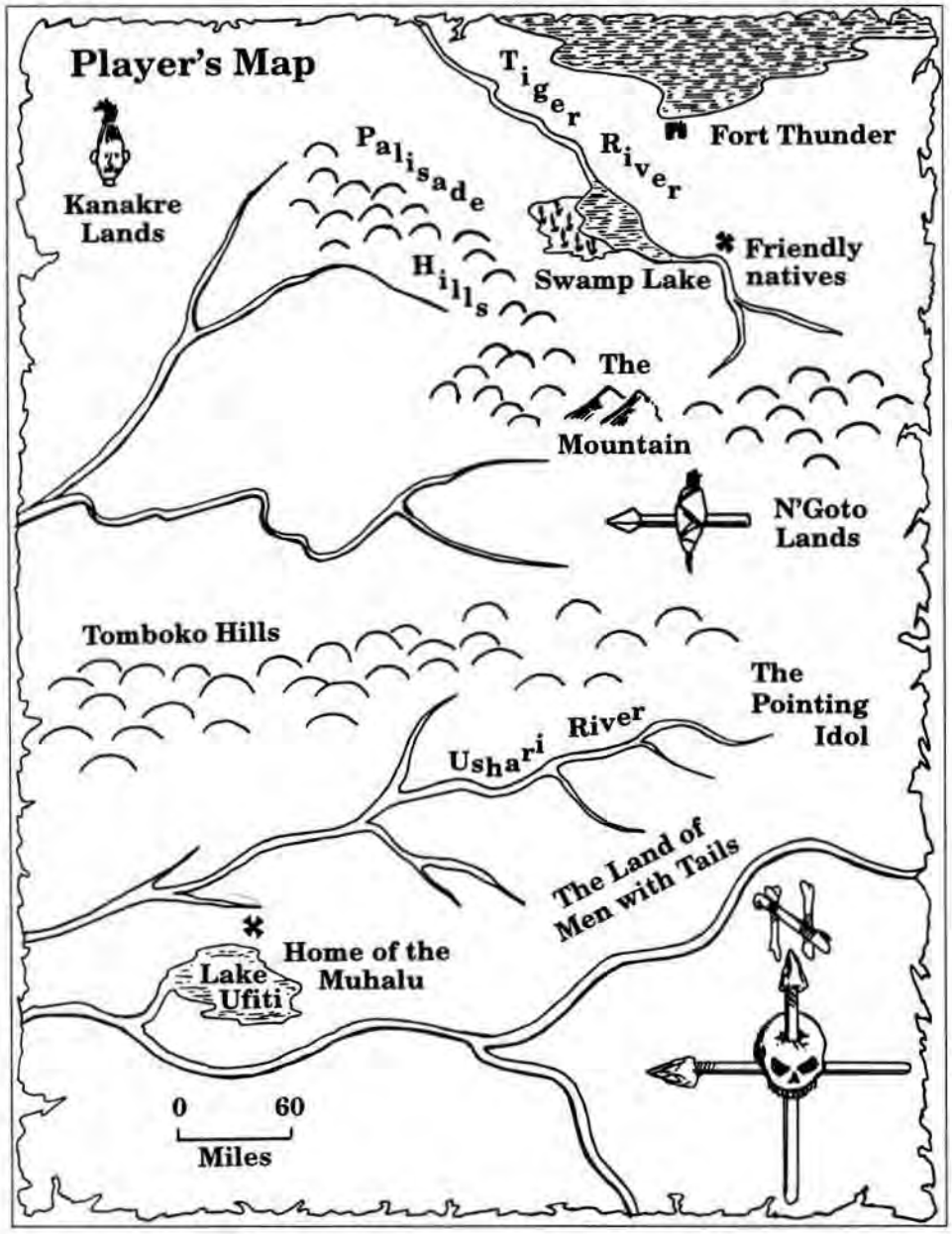
Galter stands up and, in a voice thick with emotion, says, "Please think carefully on this. While I'm anxious to find out what happened to my boy, you should know now what you'll be facing. You'll be traveling into absolute wilderness, unknown to northerners. The land is inhabited by several hostile tribes, including the Ngoto headhunters. On the other hand, there could be a legendary treasure at the end. With all this in mind, what do you say to my offer?"

If the PCs decline the offer, Galter looks grievously disappointed, but he thanks them for their time. Lucian shows them out. Galter instructs Lucian to contact another group.

If the PCs accept the offer, Galter sits back down, looking much less haggard. He tells the PCs what he knows of Korman's journey.

The Land of Men With Tails has much folklore but little proven fact attached to it. The natives tell of strange creatures found there. Tiny men with long tails hunt game in the jungle, and they can kill elephants with a single blow. Man-eating giants with hairy bodies and flat noses lurk among the trees. Stone ruins of great cities lie among the trees and are home to many monsters.

The most intriguing rumor is that of the Muhalu. Galter will not vouch for



the accuracy of any of these rumors, as he is just repeating native stories.

Galter gives the PCs a written list of all the men in Korman's party. They include:

Korman: swordsman; 6′ tall, sandy hair, gray eyes, 20 years old, lean, muscular, uses short sword and shield.

Bakar: thief, 5′ 10″, black hair, dark eyes, 18 years old; found dead near the fort, the only one accounted for.

Memnon: priest of a benign healing god; 5′9″, brown hair, brown eyes, stout, 20 years old; uses mace and shield.

Ortho: mage; 5′8″, blonde, gray eyes, 19 years old, very thin, wears garish green robes.

Olvero: once a garrison soldier; 5′9″, brown hair, brown eyes, 18 years old, very muscular; uses long sword and shield.

Palance: former elephant hunter; 6′ tall, black hair, brown eyes, 21 years old, very muscular; uses long sword and heavy crossbow.

Galter also tells the PCs of Korman's planned route, which he learned from one of Korman's friends who did not go on the trip. Korman planned to head south to the "mountain" marked on the map, then southeast toward the "Pointing Idol," shown near the source of the Ushari River. If they take Korman's route, the party will follow the river downstream, until they find the lake's shore. By hugging the lake shore to the southeast, they should eventually find the "home of Muhalu" shown on the map.

This complicated route was necessary because of the completely unknown territory Korman's party traveled through, not to mention the chance that the map was not accurate. Rather than strike blindly into the jungle, Korman deemed it wiser to go from landmark to landmark. Galter suggests that the PCs go by the same route, both to avoid getting lost and to find any traces of Korman along the way. After all, the group may not have made it all the way to Lake Ufiti, and they could be stranded somewhere along the planned route.

Arn Galter: AL CG; AC 5; MV 12; F10; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 12, C 15, I 14, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14; *bracers of defense AC 5, long sword +2,* dagger.

Lucian: AL NG; AC 10; 0-lvl; hp 5; unarmed; MV 12; S 11, D 10, C 11, I 17, W 14, Ch 13; ML 8.

Galter immediately begins preparations for the PCs' trip. He arranges for the necessary jungle gear: waterproof packs, compact rations, oil for metal and leather, bags of salt, tents with insect screens, machetes, lanterns, ropes, etc. Galter provides whatever nonmagical items the PCs desire. If the PCs request pack animals, Galter recommends burros. They are the only ones that thrive on jungle foliage. Horses, oxen, mules, and camels starve in the jungle. Flying mounts are poor choices, as pegasi starve and griffons must spend most of their time hunting. In addition, flying PCs see little on the ground due to the dense jungle canopy, which blankets the ground and even covers rivers up to 50′ wide. Galter recommends that the PCs take trade goods along, in case they encounter natives. Most useful are bags of salt, fish hooks, steel ingots, and machetes. Giving trade goods as presents to village chiefs is the best way to get free passage, but a few tribes, including the Ngoto headhunters, attack all outsiders, regardless of presents.

Galter has the PCs ready to travel in two days. He meets them at the south gate, with their pack animals and gear.

Galter hands them Korman's map, wishes them luck, and orders the gate to be opened. Once the PCs leave town, they are completely on their own.

The Journey

The land south of Fort Thunder is open forest and brush that soon gives way to the typical rain forest of endless closed tree canopy. The jungle is fairly easy to travel and becomes dense only around hills, ravines, rivers, or where the jungle was once cleared and has regrown. These areas require machetes to clear a path. Movement Rates for the PCs are as in the *DMG*/124–125.

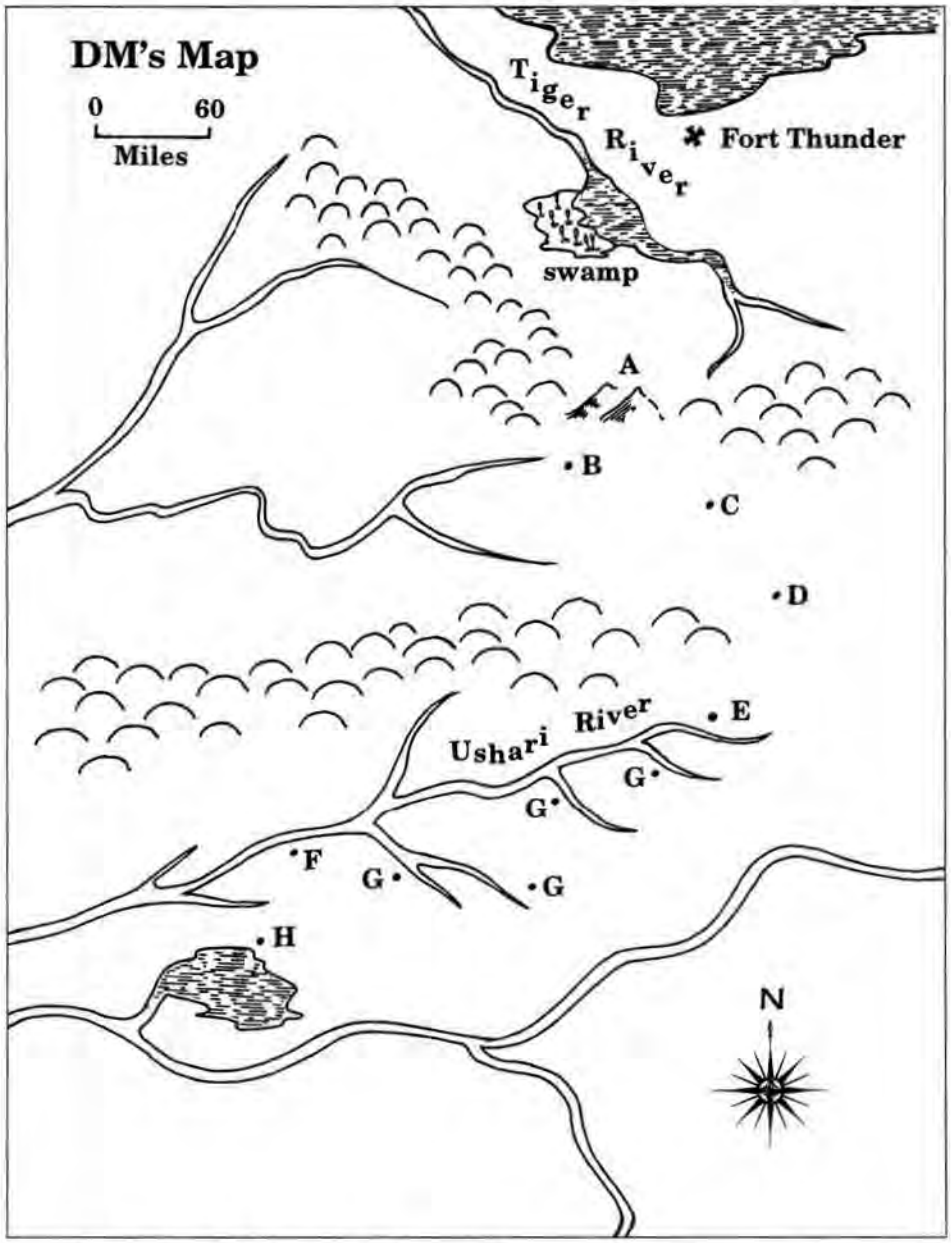
There are three hill ranges the PCs might move through. One is the Palisade hills south of the Tiger River; this range was named by the Watanga natives, as the hills are the northern border of their enemies, the Ngoto headhunters. The Tomboko hills lie north of the Ushari River. A small unnamed range stands on Lake Ufiti's eastern shore.

Tropical disease is a horror that afflicts only northerners; only natives, paladins, and monks over 5th level are immune. The fever is not highly contagious, and it is usually contracted through mosquitos or bad water. Detailed rules on disease are given in "The Dark Continent" and in FRM 1: *The Jungles of Chult*. If the DM does not have access to these resources, he can decide the effects himself.

Due to the intense heat and humidity, PCs can wear only leather or hide armor. Heavier armor brings a risk of heatstroke. Rules on this are given in the *Wilderness Survival Guide* (page 28) and the AL-QADIM® rulebook (pages 78–80). If the DM does not have these available, he should simply inform the players of the armor limits. Of course, magic (such as a *ring of fire resistance*) can overcome this problem.

The DM should roll for random encounters once per day and once per night, with a 1 in 8 chance. If an encounter occurs, roll on the encounter table; if the PCs are moving along a river, swamp, or lake, roll on the river encounter table. Note that the table lists only significant creatures. The PCs constantly see small creatures like insects, monkeys, birds, and rodents.

The DM should keep a close watch on the PCs' food supply. Though they might think otherwise, the jungle is a poor place to forage for human food, and there is a good possibility that they will run out of rations. Some of the creatures on the encounter table could be killed for food, but there is no plant food to be found, other than in native gardens.



Encounter Areas

A. The Mountain.

After miles of monotonous jungle, the terrain ahead of you becomes higher and rugged. You can see a range of low hills, all clad in green jungle canopy. One large hill stands by itself, much taller than the other hills, almost a mountain in size. The slopes are covered with gullies and boulders, which break up the jungle canopy.

This is the "mountain" marked on the Players Map. While not a real mountain, it is so much higher than the other hills, the first northerners to see it dubbed it such. The hill is steep and rugged. A spring on the south slope gives rise to a small stream.

B. Ngoto Village. The land between the Palisade and Tomboko hills is home to a tribe of Ngoto headhunters. Their village of hundreds sits by a small river. The Ngotos are not evil, but they are very xenophobic and always attack strangers. The warriors wear the equivalent of leather armor, and carry large oval shields covered with zebra skin. They use short bows, spears, clubs, and knives in combat.

The PCs encounter a Ngoto patrol within 1–12 hours of entering this hex.

Ngoto warriors (18): AL CN; AC 7; MV; 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 2 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon; ML 16; short bow, 12 flight arrows, spear (specialized), armor, shield; XP 65.

Patrol leader: AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; F3; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 2 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon; ML 16; short bow, 12 flight arrows, spear (specialized), armor, shield; XP 120.

Regardless of who is surprised, one warrior flees, trying to reach the village and raise the alarm. If the Ngotos surprise the PCs, the encounter should be treated as an ambush, and the running warrior automatically escapes. The Ngotos fire volleys of arrows until they run out or the PCs close to melee range, whereupon the Ngotos leap fiercely into melee. The Ngotos fight until they fail a morale check, but they do not check morale until their leader is slain. The Ngotos fight to kill, not to capture, and wounded PCs are not spared. If the Ngotos win the fight, they take the skulls of the slain PCs to their village.

If the running warrior escapes to warn the village, and if the PCs survive the encounter with the patrol, a second Ngoto force sets out to pursue the PCs. This much larger force consists of 30 warriors, six patrol leaders, two champions, a shaman named Bonambi, and the chief, Indoloko.

Champion: AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; F5; hp 33; THAC0 16; #AT 2 or 3/2; Dmg by weapon; ML 16; short bow, 12 flight arrows, spear (specialized), armor, shield; XP 270.

Bonambi: AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; C6; hp 36; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 13, D 16, C 16, I 11, W 16, Ch 11; ML 18; XP 650; leather armor, club.

Spells: *cure light wounds* ×3, *entangle* ×2, *hold person* ×3, *silence 15× radius, warp wood, dispel magic, summon insects*

Indoloko: AL CN; AC 4; MV 12; F10; hp 75; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon (specialized with spear, +3/+5); S 18/75, D 17, C 17, I 14, W 11, Ch 12; ML 20; XP 2,000; leather armor, shield, *spear +2* (total +5/+7), knife.

This second group does everything in its power to destroy or capture the PCs. The warriors first stand off and fire arrows, while Bonambi uses his capturing spells (*entangle, hold person,* etc.) from a comfortable distance. The shaman casts *silence* against an enemy spellcaster and *warp wood* on the PCs' weapons or shields. If the Ngotos run out of arrows or suffer badly from the PCs' return fire, Indoloko leads them in a charge to melee. If badly wounded, the chief tries to retreat back to the shaman to be healed; any nearby warriors gladly cover his retreat. If Indoloko is killed, the other Ngotos must make morale checks every round after. Failure means that they stream away from the fight, running into the jungle in all directions. In the retreat, Bonambi targets one PC with *summon insects,* hoping to delay pursuit. If the PCs win this fight, the Ngotos do not send any more men to fight them.

If the Ngotos win the fight, the skulls of slain PCs are taken back to the village. PCs captured by Bonambi's spells suffer a worse fate. The Ngotos strip them of all gear and clothing, leaving everything lying on the ground (taking only food), then bind and gag the PCs securely. The Ngotos tie their captives to stout poles and carry them back to the village. If there are too few Ngotos surviving to carry the captives, the Ngoto simply kill the PCs.

The village is a collection of hundreds of round, thatched huts scattered along the north bank of the river. Hundreds of women and children (0-lvl, unarmed) taunt the PCs as the warriors carry them in. The PCs, still bound and gagged, are thrown into a filthy hut and left overnight, guarded by a champion standing in the entrance.

At dawn, warriors arrive to drag the PCs to a clearing in the center of the village. A huge stone idol stands in the clearing, depicting a stylized man with a spear. This is the Ngoto patron deity, called simply The Warlord. Hundreds of human skulls are stacked around the feet of the idol. The PCs are taken one by one to the idol. Each is forced down so that his head touches the idol's right

Daylight Encounters. Roll 1d12.

1. Antelope (1–6): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA stampede in random direction, PCs caught in path trampled by 1–4 animals for dmg 1–4 per animal; SZ M; ML 3; XP 35; *MM*/243.

Jungle species live in small groups and include the bongo, sitatunga, duiker, and waterbuck. All are timid creatures that prefer to flee, fighting only if cornered. Antelope are the most prized game and can provide food for hungry PCs. One antelope provides three daily rations (a daily ration is food required for one PC for one day).

2. Gorilla (2–5 males, 2–8 females, 2–8 young): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4+1; hp 32 (male), 21 (female), THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–6; SA rend for 2–8 dmg if both hands hit on 18+; ML 9; XP 65; *MM*/241.

Despite their fearsome reputation, gorillas are rarely hostile. The dominant male moves toward the PCs, huffing angrily and launches a false charge. If the PCs stand firm, the gorilla stops, looks puzzled, and the entire troop leaves the area. If the PCs run, the male pursues, attempts to bite one PC on the rear, and then leaves. If the PCs attack, all the adults attack.

3. Ape, carnivorous (2–5 males, 2–8 females, 2–8 young): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12, climb 9; HD 5; hp 40 (male), 32 (female); THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/1–8; SA rend for 2–8 dmg if both hands hit with an 18+; ML 12; XP 175; *MM*/241.

Carnivorous apes look almost exactly like gorillas; only natives can tell them apart. As with gorillas, the dominant male stalks toward the PCs, huffing angrily. One round later, all the adults charge and attack. Thus, PCs who previously encountered gorillas are in for a rude surprise.

4. Baboon (10–40): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+1; hp 6; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; ML 6; XP 35; *MM*/241.

These are mandrills, large jungle baboons with garish colored faces. The baboons growl and bark savagely, facing the PCs while the young and nursing mothers climb to safety. If the PCs advance or attack, the adults attack in a mob. Otherwise, the adults retreat when the noncombatants reach safety.

5. Boar (1–3): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3–12; SA fight until reduced to –7 hp; ML 12; XP 175; *MM*/241.

There are several species of jungle swine, from the bushpig to the giant forest hog. Boars prefer to retreat from humans, but if wounded, they immediately turn and attack. A boar provides three daily rations.

6. Buffalo (2–8): INT semi-; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1–8/1–8; SA charge of 40′ causes 3–18 dmg + dmg 1–4 trampling; SD head is AC 3; ML 10; XP 175; *MM*/243.

Forest buffalos are scarcer than their savannah kin, but they are just as unpredictable. Anyone who approaches within 40′ is charged. Buffalo are dangerous game, but each carcass yields ten daily rations.

7. Centipede, huge (1): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 21; HD 1 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison—save at +4 or be paralyzed for 1–6 hours; makes saving throws at –2; ML 6; XP 35; *MM*/42.

Centipedes are irritable, 6′ long pests. They excel at hiding in foliage, and they bite at a random PC's foot, then retreat.

8. Chimpanzee (2–20): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12, climb 9; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1–2/1–2/1–4; ML 6; XP 65; new monster.

Chimpanzees look comical, but they can be irritable and dangerous. They do not attack a large group of PCs, and they stay in the trees, pelting the party with fruit and twigs. Most of the missiles do not harm, but one missile every round (aimed at a random PC) is a rock which inflicts 1–4 hp damage. If the PCs leave, the chimps usually ignore them. However, if there is a gnome or halfling PC, the chimps discreetly follow. The chimps wait for a moment when the PC is alone and attack only him. Any determined counterattack drives them away permanently.

9. Elephant (1–6): INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; Dmg 2–16/2–16/2–12/2–12/2–12; can fight up to six opponents per round, but only two attacks can be directed at a single foe; SZ L (11′ tall); ML 7; XP 4,000; *MM*/107.

Forest elephants live in small groups. They ignore PCs who keep their distance, attacking those who come within 40′. If a single elephant is encountered, it is a violent rogue who attacks the PCs on sight. Each elephant has two tusks worth 100–600 gp each, but weighing 25–150 lbs (1 lb. per 4 gp). An elephant carcass yields 20 daily rations.

10. Leopard (1–3): INT semi-; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+2; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–8; SA rear claws rake for 1–4/1–4 if both front paws hit; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ L (6′ long); ML 9; XP 270; *MM*/36.

Leopards are attracted to pack animals and straggling PCs, but they do not attack a large group. Their goal is to leap on and kill one animal, and then carry the carcass into a tree (burros and men are easily carried). Any determined counterattack drives the leopard away.

11. Snake, poisonous (1): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/320.

Poisonous snakes abound in the jungle. They are irritable and hard to see, due to coloration. There is a 50% chance the snake strikes from a branch, aiming at the PC's face and neck; success means that the PC must make his saving throw immediately, and a failed save means that the PC suffers the effects of the poison the next round. The snake retreats after biting, as PCs are too big to eat.

12. Spider, hairy: INT low; AL N; AC 8; MV 12, web 9; HD 1–1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison—save at +2 or suffer a –1 on attack rolls and –3 to Dex checks for 2–5 rounds; SZ T; ML 10; XP 65; *MM*/326.

Note that this is not the evil webdweller of the underdark, but a large jungle spider. Some of these species make weird clicking sounds, and most are harmless. This encounter is with an irritable species that strikes at a PCs' face after dropping from a branch or vine. Once it has bitten, the spider jumps away and scuttles off into the brush.

Night Encounters. Roll 1d4.

The statistics for these creatures are given above, but their behavior changes at night.

1. **Centipede, huge.** This creature crawls into a random PC's bedroll, attracted by the body warmth. Any sudden movement causes it to bite.
2. **Leopard** (1–3). The big cats ignore sentries and try to kill a pack animal or a sleeping PC. They remain hidden in the darkness, avoiding bright lights. If the PCs are in tents, the leopards are baffled and try to claw a hole in the cloth. They tear through in one round but the noise alerts anyone inside.
3. **Snake, poisonous.** The snake is attracted by the body warmth of a sleeping PC, and crawls into a random bedroll. Any movement or sudden light causes it to bite and retreat.
4. **Spider, hairy.** This creature crawls into a random PC's bedroll (50%) or boot (50%). In the former case, the spider meanders over the PC's bare flesh, eventually walking onto the face. Any sudden movements or blows cause it to bite. If the spider ends up in a boot, and the PC does not shake out his boots in the morning (player must say his PC is doing so), the PC is automatically bitten when he puts them on.

River Encounters. Roll 1d4.

1–2. Roll on Daylight Encounters table.

3. **Crocodile** (1–4): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 3; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/1–12; SA –2 bonus to surprise foes; SZ L (10′ long); ML 9; XP 65; *MM*/49.

   Crocodiles attack a random PC or pack animal, bursting out of the water at lightning speed, and dragging their victim into the water. If a crocodile succeeds at dragging a carcass into the water, it attracts 1–3 more crocodiles per round until the carcass is gone.
4. **Hippopotamus** (1–20): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 9, swim 12; HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3–18; ML 14; XP 975; new monster.

   Hippos are huge and irritable pachyderms who are common in the Dark Continents' rivers. They prefer to ignore humans who stay at least 50′ away. Those who move closer are attacked. However, if the PCs encounter hippos and are between the animals and the water (50% chance), the hippos immediately charge, attacking for 1–4 rounds and then moving into the river.

foot. Then, Bonambi (or, if he was slain, another shaman with identical statistics) decapitates each PC with a huge razor-sharp machete. The skull is added to the pile of trophies, the body thrown into the river.

The PCs might be able to come up with an escape plan, but note that they are securely bound and gagged. A successful Bend Bars roll at a +10% penalty can break the heavy ropes. Alternately, a successful Rope Use proficiency check at a –10 penalty allows a character to wriggle free.

If the PCs escape their bonds, they must then deal with the guard at the entrance, who wastes no time raising the alarm. Even if the PCs silence the guard, they remain unarmed and surrounded by hostile villagers. They have a better chance of escaping at night, when most of the Ngotos are asleep. The DM must judge how well any escape plan works; if the PCs manage to escape their bonds and silence the guard, they have already beaten the odds, so the DM might show mercy and let them escape the village. They are still naked and weaponless—just getting back to civilization is an adventure, now.

If the PCs examine the stacks of skulls around the idol, they find one with a rusting steel helmet of northerner make. The helmet has the symbol of Fort Thunder's armorers' guild inscribed on the inside. The helmeted skull is that of Olvero, and the skulls of Ortho and Memnon are here also, although they can't be readily identified. Korman's party clashed with the Ngotos as they moved south of the mountain and lost half their number to the natives (see encounters C and D).

C. Battleground. As the PCs move through this area, they suddenly come across two skeletons on the jungle ground. The remains have obviously been there for months: the bones have been picked clean, and vines grow up through them. Both have the rotted remnants of northerner clothing, but the skeletons are missing the skulls. Two crumbling leather backpacks lie nearby, and numerous items are scattered about. Ten yards further on, the PCs find the bones of two burros, with the remnants of leather packs and straps.

This was where Korman's party met with disaster. As they passed near the Ngoto village (area B), the group met a Ngoto patrol. The headhunters were beaten, but a warrior got away to warn the village. A second, much larger, Ngoto force trailed the men and caught up to them here. This time, the Ngotos won, and Olvero and Memnon were killed. The rest fled, but without their burros. The Ngotos killed the burros, looted the bodies, and continued their pursuit of Korman. Memnon's skeleton still has a bronze symbol of his deity around his severed neck, with his name inscribed on the back. Olvero can be identified by the bronze medal pinned on his shirt, his identification as a member of Fort Thunder's garrison. The medal has his name and enlistment date inscribed on the back.

The items scattered on the ground were discarded by the Ngotos, who took only food and the skulls of the slain. The items (rope, pouches, etc.) have mostly been ruined by the rain. The only items of value intact are 36 gp and an empty ivory scroll case (8 gp).

D. The Sacrifice. Korman's party fled through here after escaping the Ngoto attack at area C. This is where the Ngotos again caught up with them. Nervous and alert, Korman's men were not surprised and managed to escape, except for Ortho. After overpowering and beheading the mage, the Ngotos then hung his headless corpse up in a tree, as an offering to their deity.

The first sign of Orthos' demise is the scattering of items under his tree: a backpack, clothing, a rusted dagger, rope, and a crumbling book. All have been ruined by the daily rain. The book was Ortho's spell book, but it has been thoroughly soaked and ruined. The pages are illegible, but Ortho's name is faintly visible on the inside cover.

To find Ortho's skeleton, the PCs must first look up into the tree's branches. There they see the skeleton, minus the skull, tied upright and spread-eagled between two branches. The moldering remains of his green robes still cling to his bones.

E. The Pointing Idol.

You have been able to hear the sounds of running water ahead of you for several minutes. The vegetation has gotten much thicker, forcing

you to clear a path with machetes. Suddenly, you break free of the vines and find yourself standing on the bank of a river, over 30' wide. Incredibly, the massive foliage of the huge jungle trees casts its canopy completely over the river, shading it just as much as the ground you stand on. Nearby, you can see a large statue set on a block of gray stone; the whole structure is 20' high. The statue depicts an ape standing on two legs and an arm, the other arm raised to point downriver. You can see that someone has recently cleared the vegetation around the statue, sometime in the past few months. There are cut vines, fallen trees, and hacked brush. The statue itself seems ancient, as the stone is weathered and pitted.

This is the "Pointing Idol" shown on Korman's map. Korman's party found the statue and cleared the vegetation that covered it. The river, called the Ushari by the natives, runs across nearly the entire width of the jungle on the Dark Continent, and eventually empties into the ocean far to the west. The eastern third of it forms the northern edge of the Land of Men with Tails, as shown on the map.

On the front edge of the statue's base, beneath the pointing arm, a series of strange symbols are carved into the rock. This ancient language no longer exists; the PCs need a *comprehend languages* or similar magical effect to understand them. The symbols read simply, "Muhalu."

The area around the statue is now home to a male jungle giant, who moved into the area a week ago. Unlike others of his kind, the giant, Aboa, has never befriended humans, considering them just another meal.

Aboa (jungle giant): INT average; AL N; AC 3; MV 15; HD 11; hp 60; THAC0 9; #AT 1 or 2 bow; Dmg 2–16+9 or 2–12+9/2–12+9; SA; surprise, arrows, poison; SZ H; ML 16; XP 6,000; *MM*/142; bow, 12 arrows, club.

Aboa has a camouflaged blind set up 50 yards from the statue, placed to have a clear field of fire at game coming to drink. There is a 60% chance he is hidden well enough to impose a –1 penalty to surprise the PCs. Aboa first attacks with his poisoned arrows, firing two per round. The poison causes paralysis for 2–12 turns unless a save vs. paralyzation is successful. If he runs out of arrows or is forced into melee, Aboa steps out of the blind and fights with his huge club. Aboa does not retreat unless he suffers 40 hp damage.

If all the PCs are captured, Aboa ties them hand and foot and stores them in a 15' deep covered pit. Slain PCs are eaten immediately. Aboa's plan is to eat one random PC every two days. Thus, the PCs may have a chance to escape, if they can get free of their bonds (Aboa does *not* put any of their gear into the pit, but piles it near the statue). However, the cover of the pit requires a Strength of 19 to remove.

Aboa has little treasure, and his weapons are too large for humans to use. His belt pouch contains skinning knives, flint and steel, a large agate (50 gp), fish hooks, and rope.

If the PCs survive Aboa's attack, their next step is to travel down river, where the map shows the Muhalu.

F. Village

The jungle here looks to be uninhabited, but, as if by magic, a small man suddenly appears in front of you. He looks much like the other natives of the Dark Continent, but he stands only 4' high. You can see a furry tail hanging limply behind him. He wears only a skin loincloth, and has a bow and arrow held casually in one hand. He looks at you in curiosity, but not hostility.

The man is not a halfling, but a pygmy named Bajua. His folk are the natives of the Land of Men with Tails. His "tail" is just a tail from one of the skins used to make his loincloth. The pygmies are secretive and elusive, but they like to trade for things they cannot make themselves and are always glad to receive gifts. Korman managed to make friends with this clan and spent a week in their village. Bajua is the clan chief, and he was leading a hunting party when they heard the PCs approaching. The pygmies recognized the PCs as being of Korman's people, and they decided to attempt friendly contact.

If the PCs attack Bajua (note that he does not start a fight), the chief dives for cover, and a volley of 11 arrows arcs out of the foliage. The pygmies have silently moved to surround the PCs, and their arrowheads are coated with hunting poison (see sidebar). The initial attack has a –4 bonus to surprise the PCs. The pygmies are superb guerrilla fighters, and they slip silently through the brush, moving and firing. The pygmies do not bunch up in one place, scattering in all directions if forced to retreat. The pygmies do not flee unless five of them are killed.

Pygmies (11): AL N; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA poison, surprise; ML 12; XP 65; each has short bow, 12 poisoned arrows, club, shield.

Bajua: AL N; AC 5; MV 9;F3; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA poison, surprise; ML 18; XP 120; each has short bow, 12 poisoned arrows, club, shield.

If the PCs attempt friendly contact, Bajua accepts it. He calls into the brush, and another pygmy appears beside him. The second hunter holds a steel helmet, obviously of northerner make, and he offers it to the PCs. The helmet is a *helm of comprehending languages and reading magic.* It once belonged to Korman, but he gave it to the Pygmies as a gift of friendship. If a PC dons the helmet, Bajua grins and welcomes the PCs to his people's lands. Next he asks if they are friends of Korman.

This question should provoke many questions from the PCs. Before answering them, Bajua invites the PCs to his village, which is 200 yards south of the river. The village is well hidden in a natural clearing, and there are no gardens or livestock. The pygmies are almost purely hunters/gatherers. Their beliefs forbid agriculture, mining, and even tree-cutting.

The village is home to 41 men, 43 women, and 30 children. The pygmies seem constantly happy, and they greet the PCs with open smiles when Bajua leads them in. The huts are small but clean. The pygmies offer the PCs the use of one of the largest huts, for as long as they wish. The pygmies also prepare a meal of wild game and fruits, served around a roaring fire. As the PCs eat, Bajua joins them and talks to them, as dozens of wide-eyed pygmies stare at the strangers in wonder.

Your meal is simple, but filling. As you eat, Bajua joins you at the fire, and sits down. You hear him say (translated through the strange *helm* you were given), "You asked about Korman, and I will now tell

you of him. He and two men named Bakar and Palance came here, and met one of our hunting parties. Korman gave me the wondrous *helm* you now wear, so we could speak to each other. He told us of the hardships they endured; Ngotos that killed his companions, snakes that crawled into their bedrolls, and rogue elephants that charged them. Korman is a good man, and we did not want him to go to his death, but he stayed here only seven days. He and the others are certainly doomed, for they seek the cursed statue Muhalu. Many have sought that legendary treasure, but none have returned.

Take my advice—do not go in search of him, or you will be lost as well."

If the PCs insist on going in search of Korman, Bajua shakes his head sadly and gives the PCs directions to Muhalu.

"Your choice makes me sad. I think we will not see you again. None can seek the Muhalu and live. Still, it is your fate you choose, and we cannot stop you. To find the Muhalu, you must go southwest until you come to the shores of the lake. Follow along the eastern shore of the lake, and you will come upon the home of the Muhalu. It is found in a ruined village of great stone huts. The cursed statue is guarded by the utuchekulu, who live in the ruins. The utuchekulu are cruel people, and they often raid into our lands, taking prisoners back to the ruins. No one ever sees them again. Once again, I ask you to stay away from the Muhalu, and go back to your homes."

Although the PCs will probably still insist on searching for Korman, the pygmies can add little to what Bajua has already told them. They do not know what the Muhalu looks like, except that it is of gold. They refuse to discuss the utuchekulu any further, saying that such talk could draw their attention and initiate a raid into Bajua's lands; the utuchekulu are said to have great magical and spiritual abilities.

The pygmies are generous, and host the PCs for as long as they wish to stay. They are open and friendly, as long as the PCs do not try to abuse, cheat, or insult them. Any such actions are met by force. The pygmies hunt the PCs through the jungle, firing poisoned arrows and dodging away. Messengers are sent to other pygmy villages; in a matter of days, hundreds pygmies are on the warpath. The PCs may be more powerful, but the pygmies have overwhelming numbers.

When the PCs are ready to leave the village, Bajua wishes them well and takes back the *magical helm*. No pygmies accompany them. Due to their fear of the Muhalu's curse, none of the villagers can be persuaded to serve as guides or bearers to the ruins.

G. Pygmy Villages. These are the other pygmy villages in the Land of Men with Tails. They are roughly equal to that at area F. The DM can create the details for these as needed, if the PCs should happen to travel to any of them. For the adventure's plot to work best, the DM should make the first pygmy village encountered that of Bajua's.

H. The Ruins.

There is a large body of water somewhere ahead of you. For several minutes, you have heard waves rolling to shore, the cries of gulls, and the bellows of crocodiles. The vegetation is getting thick, forcing you to chop through.

As you hack down the last of the reeds, you see a group of crumbling stone buildings, obviously the remains of a city. Much of the city has collapsed, as jungle has overgrown it. Beyond the ruins, you see the shore of a huge lake, and swamps along the waterfront. There are three crumbling stone wharves jutting out into the lake. Nearby, there is a cluster of buildings around a central plaza. These buildings are intact, and the jungle has been cleared around them. In the center of the plaza, a tower of stone rises 50' high, with a statue of an ape on top. The ape is standing with its arms raised over the city, as if claiming dominion over it.

The ruins are the remains of an ancient city, home of the Muhalu. The city rose during the world's Bronze Age, luring people to the abundant fishing on the lake, an important source of food in the jungle. As people flocked to the city, it grew quickly and gained the services of fine artists and craftsmen.

The city's patron deity was a now-forgotten god whose avatar was an ape. A large temple was dedicated to the deity, and the Muhalu was its greatest treasure. After centuries of prosperity, the city died when the fish were depleted, and the people drifted away to seek food elsewhere. Soon, only the priests of the Muhalu were left. The outside world forgot the city by the lake, remembering only the Muhalu in legend. The city stayed lost until a century ago, when it was found by a tribe of utuchekulu, an evil dwarf-like race. They killed the priests and rebuilt part of the ruined city.

One of the utuchekulu's large pantheon was an apish god, coincidentally much like that of the city's original dwellers, but evil and destructive. The tribe held onto the Muhalu, making it the centerpiece of their temple. The utuchekulu raid the human natives' villages, including the pygmies, for food and loot. They are man-eaters by choice, taking humans over all other game. However, the utuchekulu are barely finding enough food to stay alive; the jungle provides little game, humans have learned to avoid the ruins, and the utuchekulu know nothing of gardening. The utuchekulu want to move to more fertile grounds and capture a human tribe. The utuchekulu think that humans would provide much food, both by enslaving them to grow gardens and by eating their children and elderly (a horrid plan, but one they are excited about). However, the utuchekulu know that humans are fierce warriors, and the tribe feels that they lack the strength to conquer a whole human clan.

After much debate, the utuchekulu priests developed a plan to bring supernatural aid; a powerful being from another plane to lead the tribe in battle. The being cannot be summoned unless 100 human lives are sacrificed to the utuchekulu gods, who will then open a *gate* to the plane. After years of raiding and fighting, the utuchekulu have sacrificed 99 humans; they require only one more.

It was at this unfortunate time that Korman, Bakar, and Palance entered the ruins. Palance was killed in an ambush, Korman fell into a pit trap, and Bakar escaped to flee north. Bakar wanted to return to the pygmies, but he became

disoriented and lost. He decided to move north, hoping to find a trail leading to Fort Thunder. Crazed with grief and fear, weak with hunger, and exhausted, Bakar was forced to hide in a swamp to avoid a group of Ngoto headhunters. The foul water gave him fever, and he staggered on toward the fort. He was only 20 miles away when he collapsed, and the elephant hunters found him dying.

Korman was captured and held by the utuchekulu, who decided he would make a superb 100th sacrifice, due to his strange looks; the utuchekulu believe that there is great spiritual power in unusual things. Fortunately, the tribe had to wait until the stars were in a specific pattern before the sacrifice could be done and the magic completed. Thus, Korman has been held captive for months, while the tribe waited for the heavens to properly align. The proper night has finally come, and the utuchekulu are ready to sacrifice Korman. The tribe is eager to move to a better land and have been packing their belongings. The PCs enter the ruins just as the utuchekulu prepare for the ceremony—a fortunate coincidence that gives them a chance to save Korman.

Key to the Ruins

The utuchekulu excel at making traps, and they have scattered several around the ruins. The traps are well hidden, but PCs of a wilderness background (rangers, druids, etc.) have a 3% chance per level to spot traps before they are triggered.

Snare: These are vine loops with trip wires attached to bent tree limbs. A random PC in the lead who enters the trap is caught by the legs and dragged into the air, leaving him hanging upside down and 10′ off the ground. The vine is easily cut, but the falling PC suffers 1d6 hp damage unless caught.

Pit: These are 10′ deep, 10′ in diameter, and covered with a camouflaged net of leaves and dirt. The cover is set to collapse if a weight of 300 lbs. is on it, so it is unlikely that a single PC will trigger it. The fall into the pit causes 1–6 hp damage.

Guard Post: These are shallow pits covered with a camouflaged dome of brush and grass. There are four warriors and a champion in each post. The dome allows the utuchekulu to see in all directions. Any PCs who move within 10′ of a guard post are attacked. The warriors leap up and throw off the dome over the pit, then fire arrows at short range. Their arrows are coated with hunting poison (see Utuchekulu MC sheet). The statistics below are used for all utuchekulu warriors and champions encountered in the ruins.

Warrior: AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA poison, specializes with spear (+1/+2); ML 15; XP 35; each has leather armor, shield, short bow, 20 arrows spear, knife.

Champion: AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA poison, specializes with spear (+1/+2); ML 16; XP 65; leather armor, shield, short bow, 20 arrows spear, knife.

If a guard post is sent into action, one of the warriors tries to run away and alert the barracks (7); if successful, the warriors there move to combat the invaders, while a warrior goes to the palace (12–22) to alert the utuchekulu there. If alerted, the entire tribe mobilizes to battle the PCs, using all their resources and cunning to defeat them.

1. Tree of Death.

> A huge tree grows north of the plaza. It has been trimmed and cultivated to grow so that the branches are level and horizontal. The tree is festooned with dozens of skeletons, hung by the necks with strong ropes.

This tree is used to show off the tribe's trophies, the corpses of those men killed in battle. Most of the skeletons are of pygmies, with a few other natives mixed in. One skeleton is noticeably different, as it has the remnants of northerner armor and clothing. This is the remains of Palance. He can be identified by the copper medallion on his shirt, which has his name engraved on the back, and identifies him as a member of Fort Thunder's elephant hunters guild.

2. The Tower.

> At the center of the plaza, the stone tower rises 50′ into the air. The apish statue on the top stands another 20′ tall. The entire structure looks to be made of solid stone.

This statue is not the Muhalu, but it is connected to a hidden treasure. The tower is actually a tomb for the city's first king. A secret door on the east wall leads into the burial chamber, which has a 10′ ceiling. A throne is set on the west wall, and the mummified remains of the king are propped on it. The chamber is sealed and airtight; the utuchekulu never discovered it. A swirling mist surrounds the mummy; this is a guardian, a crimson death mist. The mist is held in a permanent stasis, which is broken when the door is opened. The PCs first see a swirling pale mist that reaches out with long tendrils. The mist forms into a rough humanoid shape with long arms and fingers.

Crimson death mist: INT genius; AL NE; AC 0; MV fly 12 (6 after feeding); HD 13; hp 65; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3–30; SA –4 bonus to initiative; SD struck only by +2 or better weapon, 95% MR; SZ M (6′); ML 16; XP 9,000; *MM*/253.

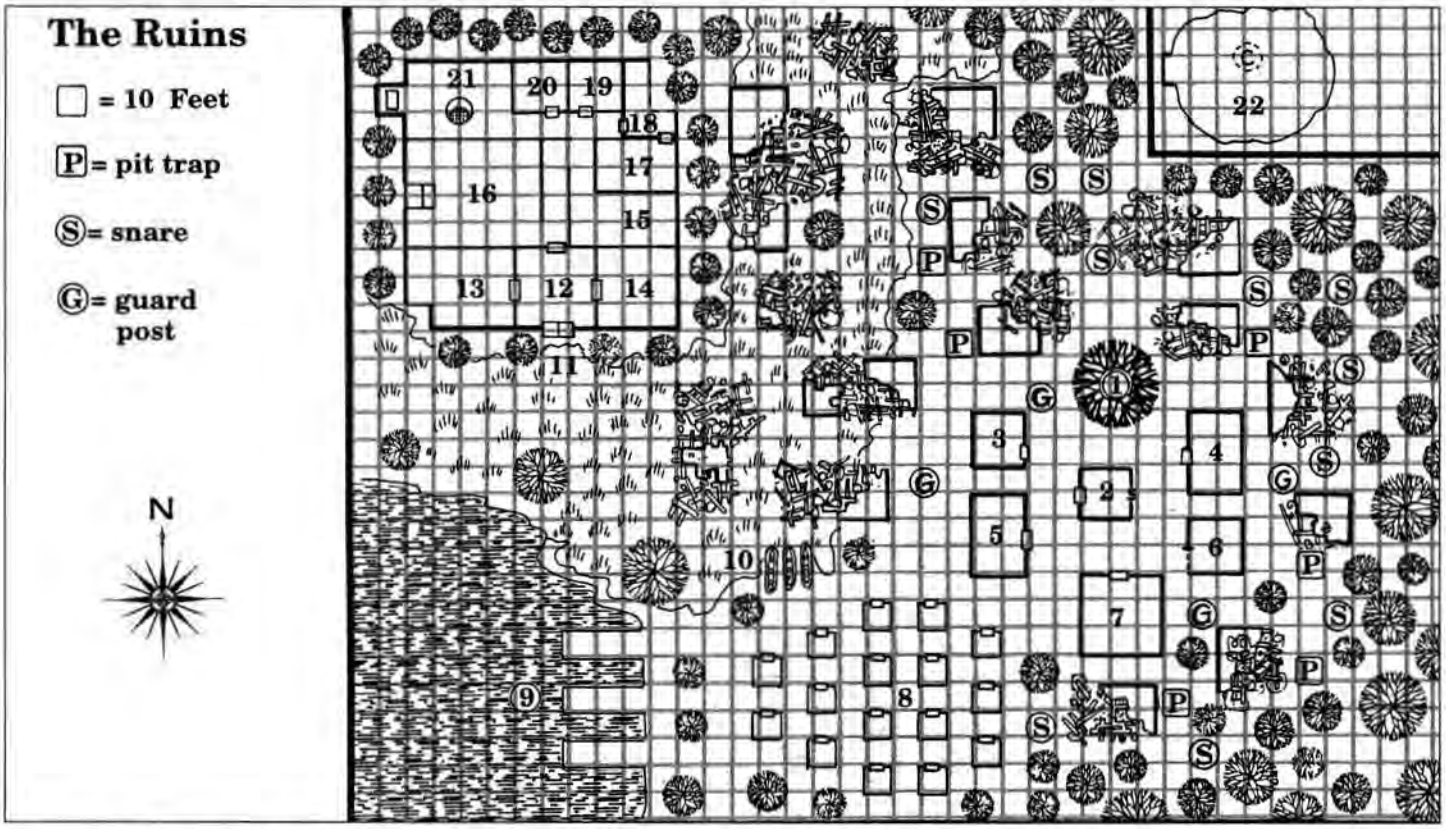
The mist strikes at one person at a time, attacking until the victim is dead or unreachable. A hit drains blood from the victim, turning the mist red. Once it has hit and damaged a victim, the mist turns solid for six turns, with an AC of 4, MV of 6, and can be hit by +1 or better weapons. The mist can lift a passive weight equal to a man, but struggling victims require an attack roll every round; failure means that it drops the victim. Note that the mist lifts weights by surrounding them with its form. The mist is magically bound to this chamber and cannot leave it, but it can shut the door if the PCs retreat outside.

The mummy has some treasure. A gold diadem (500 gp) is on its brow, and a large gold and ruby ring (400 gp) is on the right hand. The left hand holds a scepter-like *rod of flailing.*

3. Subchief's House.

> This house is small but important looking, as if someone of high status lives here. The door is made of rich wood with detailed carvings of wild animals, and the stone walls are of high workmanship.

This was once the home of a subchief named Imbona. Now, it belongs to a doppleganger named Mokrey. The monster infiltrated the tribe one year ago. He wanted to mimic the utuchekulu chief, Bonambi, but could not confront him alone, so Mokrey killed and replaced Imbona. While he is happy that the tribe is moving (Mokrey despises the harsh life of the utuchekulus), he



would like to find a better life to replace. Mokrey was present when Korman was captured, and was intrigued by the *ESP* reading he gained of Korman's easy life in Fort Thunder. Mokrey considered going to Fort Thunder alone, using Korman's form, but fears traveling so far on his own.

The arrival of the PCs changes his plans. If the PCs come near the house, Mokrey uses his *ESP* to discover their goal. When he learns that they are looking for Korman. Mokrey assumes Korman's form and pretends to be a prisoner. One flaw in the story is that his door isn't locked. If the PCs look inside, read the following:

> The room beyond the door is spartan, but comfortable. The only furnishing is a large bed of skins stuffed with down. A rug made of strange brown and white pelts covers much of the floor. As you look in, a young man sits up on the bed, gasping in surprise. He is a northerner with sandy hair and gray eyes, not a native. The man lurches to his feet and says, "Who are you? I didn't think anyone would ever find me! Can you get me away from here?"

If the PCs question Mokrey, he tells partial truths. He says that Palance was killed, Bakar fled, and he was captured and held here for months—though he doesn't know why. Mokrey also claims that the Muhalu is a false rumor and that the utuchekulu have no treasure. In general, Mokrey tries to convince the PCs that there is nothing of value here, and to take him back to Fort Thunder. If the PCs agree, Mokrey looks happy to be "rescued," but he does as little as possible to help the party, refusing to fight unless personally endangered. If returned to the fort, Mokrey spends several months learning the ropes and settling in as Korman. Eventually, Mokrey tries to poison Arn Galter and take over the business, enjoying all its benefits. Whether he succeeds or not is up to the DM. The PCs may never learn of the mistake they made. However, there are some details that Mokrey does not know about Korman: the visit to the pygmy village, the professions (fighter, thief, etc.) of his companions, or exactly where the Ngotos ambushed the party. The PCs might discover Mokrey's plot by some intelligent questioning.

Doppleganger: INT very; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–12; SA *ESP,* surprise; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm;* saves as 10th-level fighter; ML 13; XP 420; *MM*/60.

If Mokrey is discovered, he tries to disappear into the jungle. Later, he stalks the party, waiting for one to appear alone. Mokrey then assumes the form of the lone PC and attacks him. If the noise lures the other PCs to the fight, they see identical PCs fighting each other. Mokrey, of course, claims to be the real PC.

The only treasure in the room is the rug, which measures 15′ x 15′, and weighs 50 lbs. It is made of okapi skins and is unusual even in Fort Thunder, where its value 100 gp.

4. Dormitory. This building houses the unmarried women. There are no furnishings, only mats on the floor. There are 12 utuchekulu women living here (0-lvl, 1–6 hp, unarmed). If the PCs examine the room, they notice that the women were packing; their belongings are stuffed into large bags. If confronted, the women can only shrink back or flee, as they are unarmed. If attacked,

they scream, drawing the warriors from areas 6 and 7. The bachelors (in area 7) warriors are infuriated at any attacks on their sweethearts, and they fight with a +1 to hit and damage.

5. Storage. This building has thick walls and a tight-fitting door. It is used to store food and hardware. There is little left inside, since the utuchekulu have packed all the light and portable items. The only things left are four heavy kegs of water, a dozen large wooden beams, and six stone blocks.

6. Forge

> This house has an open front, allowing air to circulate freely. You can see a fire pit inside, a large iron anvil, bellows, and a water bucket. There are several bags and boxes around the anvil. Against the south wall, you can see a large stack of newly forged steel weapons: spears, arrows, knives, and machetes.

This is the home of the utuchekulu blacksmith. Like the others, the smith has been packing his gear, preparing to move. Rather than carry heavy iron ingots, the smith forges the entire stock into weapons, which are needed to conquer humans. The smith is powerful, and he lives here with his wife and two apprentices. If attacked, the smith fights with his most prized possession, a *warhammer +2,* while the apprentices fight with long knives. The smith's wife only screams hysterically, alerting the warriors in area 7. The smith fights with gusto, howling madly as he strikes. The apprentices are less dedicated, and they flee if the smith is slain.

Smith: AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F6; hp 45; THAC0 15; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon, specializes with hammer (+5/+8); S 18/85; D 15, C 15, I 13, W 10, Ch 10; ML 15; XP 420.

Apprentices (2): AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon; SA poison, specializes with spear (+1/+2); ML 15; XP 35; each has leather armor, shield, short bow, 20 arrows spear, knife.

The smith has accumulated some wealth over the years, which is hidden in a cache beneath his anvil (requires a Strength of 17 to move). The cache holds 10 uncut gems (10 gp each), five pieces of native jewelry (2–50 gp, 2–100 gp, 1–200 gp), and a *potion of sweet water.*

7. Bachelor Quarters. This large house is the barracks for the unmarried warriors. While 18 of them live here, only six are present at any time; the others are on guard duty. The warriors have also have been packing their belongings into bags; only their sleeping blankets remain on the floor. Three warriors are awake at all times, and they alert the others, who rise, armed and ready, in one round. The warriors fight fiercely if attacked inside their house, but if responding to a threat elsewhere in the city, their youth and inexperience make them nervous, bunching together in excitement. Regardless of where they fight, their morale is shaky. If they lose half their number, or see one of the utuchekulu leaders slain, the warriors must make morale checks every round.

8. Family Houses. There are 16 of these small houses, each home to a married couple. Each is home to one champion, his wife (unarmed, 0-lvl.), and 0–3 children. There is only a 50% chance that the champion is in any given house. If he is absent, the house is barred from the inside; women and children are always present. If the PCs try to batter down the door, or attack if the champion is home, the noise alerts the other houses, and 1–8 champions come to the aid of the attacked house, arriving in two rounds. Their fury at the danger to their families drives the champions to fight with a +1 to hit and damage. The women and children try to escape to warn the warriors at areas 6 and 7, who move to attack as soon as possible. The families have also been packing to move, with most of their possessions stuffed into bags.

9. Dock.

> You can see that part of the lake shore has been straightened and leveled, and three crumbling wharves stand out on the waters. The water seems shallow and murky, with dense stands of reeds. Just beyond the end of each wharf, there are the jumbled bones of a huge creature. From the curved tusks and great ribs, they look like elephant remains, lying on their sides in the mud.

The docks have deteriorated over the centuries, and the dock area has filled with silt, so the water is only 4–5 feet deep. The rank water is a breeding ground for giant leeches, and dozens of them lurk there. Hundreds of young leeches float in the water, unseen due to the murk. If the PCs enter the water, they are attacked by 2–5 giant leeches and by 2–5 additional leeches every round after. The initial attack of a leech causes 1–4 hp damage, but also numbs the area, so there is only a 1% chance that the bitten PC notices. Each round after, each leech drains one hp per round, for two rounds, and then drops away, sated. Salt makes a leech lose its hold. The blood drain is not noticed until the victim loses half his hit points.

In addition to the giant leeches (who can attack only the PCs' legs beneath the water), each PC is attacked by a swarm of young leeches (equal to a swarm of normal leeches, as given in the *MM*); assume there is a swarm in every 10′ area. A swarm inflicts 1–10 hp damage per round. Any attack on a swarm that inflicts 10 hp damage disperses the swarm and clears a 10′ area.

The utuchekulu know of the leeches, and the elephant skeletons are to lure intruders into the water. There is one skeleton 20′ west of the end of each wharf, seemingly thrown there as waste. Four of the tusks are worth 300 gp each, and weigh 75 lbs., and two are worth 400 gp and weigh 100 lbs. Of course, any PC entering the water is attacked by leeches, as noted above.

Giant leech: INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 3, swim 3; HD 2; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SZ M; ML 7; XP 120; *MM*/219.

Leech swarm: AL N; AC 10; MV swim 1; ML 5; XP 15; *MM*/219.

10. Canoes.

> Over the years, the lake has crept over the land, creating a foul swamp of murky water and rank grass. The drowned ruins of several collapsed buildings can be seen. There is an island of high ground out on the swamp, and a huge stone building stands on it. You can see several canoes drawn up on the island, and three more on your side of the swamp.

The swamp is a mix of shallow and very deep pools of water; only the island stands high and dry. The utuchekulu use canoes to move back and forth, as the swamp is impossible to walk across, due to mud and quicksand. The canoes

are well made and hold two human-sized or three dwarf-sized PCs.

11. The Guardian. Six canoes are drawn up on the island, in front of the main doors of the building. The water at the edge of the island here is 15′ deep. A fearsome guardian beast rests in the pool: a froghemoth. This huge and bizarre creature was raised by the utuchekulu from the moment it hatched, and it is under their control; the froghemoth does not attack utuchekulu. The froghemoth is a froglike beast of vaguely humanoid shape, 18′ tall, with four 15′ long tentacles and eyes and nostrils mounted on stalks. The froghemoth is resting below the water, with only its eyes and nostrils above the surface, hidden in the floating vegetation. The froghemoth is fully described in the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® page following this adventure.

The froghemoth waits until the PCs are within 10′, then bursts out of the water to attack. The tentacles grab at random PCs in the canoes; a successful attack has a 75% chance to capsize the canoe, throwing the PCs into the water. The tongue attack is used against flying or swimming PCs; otherwise, it is targeted against a random PC in a canoe. The froghemoth is a hungry beast, and it tries to kill as many PCs as possible, to be devoured later.

Froghemoth: INT animal; AL N; AC 2 (tentacle), 4 (body), 6 (tongue); MV 2, swim 8; HD 16; hp 80; THAC0 5; #AT 1 or 4; Dmg 1–8 (tongue), 5–50 (bite), 5–8 × 4 (tentacles); SA tongue, swallow whole; SZ H; ML 18; XP 9,700.

The froghemoth fights ferociously and it does not check morale until its tongue and three tentacles are severed, or if its body's hp are reduced to 30. If it fails morale, the beast barrels through the PCs and flees into the lake, disappearing underwater. Anyone caught in its path suffers 2–16 hp damage from trampling. The froghemoth has no treasure, as the utuchekulu take everything of value from its victims.

12–22. The Palace.

> Seen up close, the building on the island is a massive structure of weathered stone blocks. You can see that the building once collapsed but has since been rebuilt by expert stone workers. The double doors are made of heavy wood planks.

This huge building is the center of the utuchekulu's lives, as it houses their king, priests, and temple. The rooms are 15′ high, unless noted otherwise.

12. Guard Post. The doors to the palace are not barred during the day, but are barred at night. At all times, there are a champion and six warriors on duty in here. If intruders enter this room, one warrior runs to alert the rest of the building, while the others fight to delay the PCs.

13. Chief's Quarters.

> This room is luxuriously decorated, with zebra skins on the floor and walls. There are four mattresses of antelope skin stuffed with feathers, and a weapons rack on the north wall.

This room is home to the utuchekulu chief Bulzai and his three wives. The chief is not here now, but his wives are all present (0-lvl, 3 hp, unarmed). If the PCs enter, the women try to flee, shrieking in terror and raising the alarm. If prevented from leaving, they cower in terror until the PCs leave.

The weapons rack holds a short bow, 20 arrows, a wooden war club, two spears, and a machete. The women are in the middle of packing things into large bags; all the extra clothing and blankets are packed, so little is left in the open. Bulazi keeps little treasure here, but does have a secret cache beneath a loose stone in the middle of the floor, hidden beneath a zebra skin. The cache holds 20 uncut gems (10 gp each), 10 gold nuggets (5 gp), a potion of *extra-healing,* and potion of *fire resistance.*

14. High Priest's Room.

> Upon a small table by the west wall rest two wooden idols. One is carved to look like an apish creature with an evil grin. The other is a stylized human form with a spear. A small gold amulet on a chain hangs around the idol's neck. The only other furnishings are a rug of antelope skins and a bed made of buffalo hides.

This is the room of the high priest, Ajoga. He is not here now, and his room is unoccupied. As with the others, most of Ajoga's possessions are packed into bags for moving.

The apish idol depicts the utuchekulu deity. The human-shaped idol is actually a variant form of doll golem. The amulet around its neck is an *amulet of proof against detection and location;* thus, a *detect magic* spell reveals nothing. The doll golem is inactive and does not animate unless the amulet is taken. The golem activates one turn after the theft. The eyes open and narrow into an evil glare, and the pouting mouth widens into a fanged maw.

Doll golem: INT non-; AL LE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 10; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SD fire does half damage, *warp wood* acts as *slow* spell, immune to poison and mind attacks, *mend* spell repairs all damage; SZ T (1′); ML 20; XP 6,000; *MM*/168.

The doll golem can unerringly track the amulet, and it follows whoever carries it, attacking at an opportune moment. The golem can move with complete silence and hides in shadows with an 80% chance. The golem has a –3 bonus to surprise. However, the golem focuses only on the PC who carries the amulet.

The first attack is to hurl its tiny spear. The weapon causes only one hp damage, but the spearhead head is coated with hunting poison (see sidebar) The golem then uses its bite attack, which causes 3–18 hp damage and requires the victim to make a save vs. spells. Failure means that the victim is stricken with a severe bout of hysterical fright and screams uncontrollably one round after being bitten. The screaming causes damage to the victim, 1–4 hp damage the first round, 2d4 the second round, 3d4 the third round, and so on, until the victim is dead. A *dispel magic* breaks the spell at any time. If the victim is saved, he is weakened and suffers a –1 on all attack and saving throws per round of screaming (i.e., two rounds of screaming means a –2 penalty). The golem fights until it is destroyed or it recovers the amulet.

15. Clerics' Quarters.

> This room is sparsely furnished, containing only six rough beds of antelope skins. The room is otherwise bare.

Six lesser priests live here, but only three are present at any time.

Clerics (3): AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; C4; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; spells: *cure light wounds* –3, *darkness, hold person, silence 15′*

radius; ML 15; XP 120; each has club and shield.

If attacked, the clerics use their spells wisely. First, *hold person* spells are targeted against as many PCs as can be covered. One *silence* spell is used to cover the door, so that spellcasters cannot stand there and cast spells. The other *silence* spells are targeted against PC spellcasters. If forced into melee, the clerics fight with their clubs. Those who are badly wounded try to take cover behind the other two, then cure themselves. The noise of combat here alerts those in room 12, who come to the aid of the priests.

The clerics have nothing of value, and their meager possessions have been packed into leather bags.

16. Throne Room.

This room has a regal and barbaric look. The skins of many creatures cover the floor and walls: antelope, buffalo, leopard, zebra, and giraffe. The room is dominated by a huge wood-and-ivory throne set against the west wall. A tall brazier stands on each side of the throne. The south wall is hung with trophies: shields, spears, bows, machetes, and clubs. Most look to be of native origin, but there are three items obviously of northern make: a shield, a long sword, and a heavy crossbow.

This is the chief's throne room. Bulazi and his court are in the temple now, so the braziers are not lit. Although there are still scores of trophies on the wall, the PCs notice that many have been removed, leaving only empty hooks. The shield belonged to Korman and can be identified by Galter's merchant house symbol painted on the front. The crossbow and sword were Palance's, but the only identification on them are the stamps of Fort Thunder's weaponsmiths' guild. The other weapons were made by natives and pygmies.

The only items of value here are the ivory decorations on the throne. These can be pried loose and are worth 300 gp total.

17. Pantry. This room was built to be airtight, as it was used to store food for the palace. Again, the lightest and least perishable items have been removed and packed, leaving only two bulky kegs of water.

18. Kitchen. This room has open sides to allow smoke to escape. Two fire pits stand in the open area, and two crude ovens are against the west wall. Normally, there are many utensils, pots, pans, and plates in here, but these have all been packed into boxes, which are stacked around the room. At night, the kitchen is empty and the door leading to the corridor is locked. During the day, there are 2–5 women (noncombatant) here, preparing meals. If intruders enter the room, the women run out one of the exits, shrieking in terror. This alerts the other rooms in the palace.

19. Armory.

This room is filled with weapon racks. Although many are empty, there are still many small weapons of native design: bows, arrows, spears, clubs, and machetes.

The door to this room is locked at all times, and only the chief has the key. This is the utuchekulu armory. Much of it has been packed into boxes, in preparation for the journey. Still, there are 20 spears, 20 war clubs, 15 short bows, 30 quivers with 20 arrows each, and ten machetes remaining. Most of the weapons are ordinary, but there are four *arrows +2* in one quiver. One of the machetes is a magical *trailblazer +2* weapon. This machete cleaves easily through vegetation, including tree branches up to 5′ thick, with a single blow. In melee, the machete is equal to a *scimitar +2,* but it has a +4 bonus against plant monsters (shambling mounds, choke creepers, etc.). The machete is immune to the touch of green slime, olive slime, gray ooze, and similar creatures.

20. Treasury. The door to this room is always locked, and only the chief has the key.

A breathtaking sight meets your eyes as you push open the door. You can see four large chests, four tall vases filled with gold and gems, and a pile of neatly-stacked leather bags on the floor. A large statue of a lion, made of dull gray stone, stands by the north wall.

This room is the storehouse for the utuchekulus' loot. The lion statue is not the Muhalu, but it is home to a magical protector: a lesser guardian yugoloth. The monster was placed here by the utuchekulu priests to guard the room. If the PCs enter the room, a ghostly ape-like form floats out of the statue and glares fiercely at them. If the PCs don't leave within two rounds, the yugoloth takes solid form and attacks.

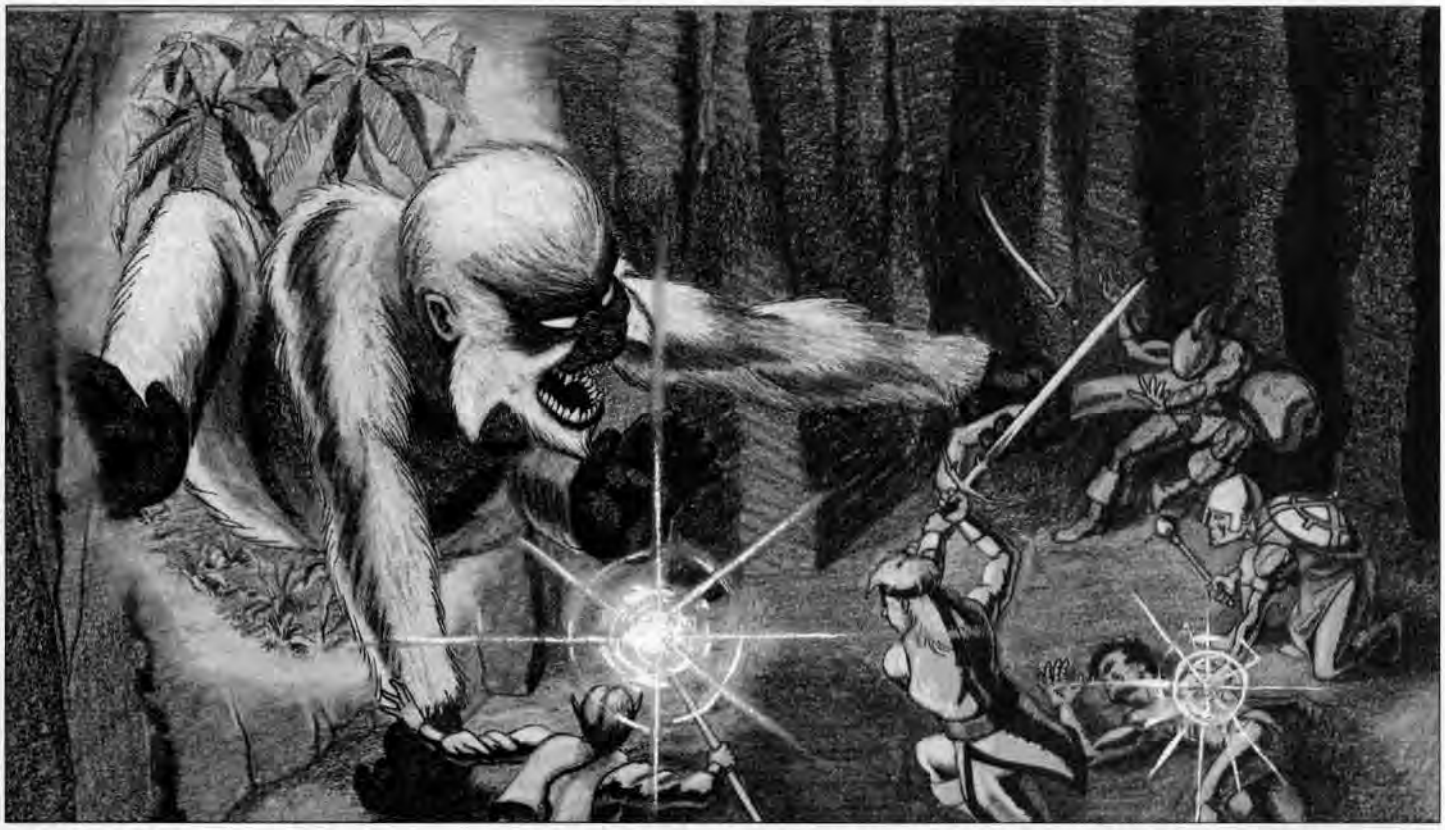
Lesser guardian yugoloth: INT very; AL NE; AC 1; MV 9; HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/1–12; SA breath weapon; SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to *polymorph,* mind attacks, fire; ML 16; XP 4,000; *MM*/371.

The yugoloth has an apish body with the head of a warthog. Its first attack is to breathe a cone of fire 30′ long and 10′ in diameter. The fire does 5d6 hp damage, but a successful saving throw halves the damage. If this fails to chase away the PCs, it attacks with teeth and claws. It can use its breath weapon twice more, and it targets PCs who stand off to use missiles or spells. The yugoloth fights to the death.

The utuchekulu have kept most of the loot they have captured. One chest holds 3,000 cp, the second holds 2,100 sp and 2,000 cp, and the third has 800 gp and 400 sp. Most of the coins are of ancient minting by the city's human founders. The fourth chest holds items taken from northerners: four flint and steel kits, six belt pouches, two waterskins, a dozen whetstones, six lanterns, three flasks of oil, six candles, four cloaks, and two backpacks. On top of the pile is a stained and ruined velvet cloak, and a signet ring (20 gp) that has Arn Galter's house symbol engraved on it. These two items were Korman's.

The vases are 4′ tall and of native design. Two are filled with 500 uncut gems each (10 gp/gem). Two are filled with gold dust and nuggets, with a total value of 800 gp per vase.

The bags on the floor hold a variety of items, and were packed by the utuchekulu in preparing for their move. There are 20 suits of leather armor (15 dwarf-size, five human-sized), 20 hide-covered shields, four short swords, a scimitar, a longbow, two long swords, and seven daggers. Most of these were items captured from northerner adventurers or natives who traded with northerners.



21. Temple.

Well before you reach this room, you can hear the voices of many people, chanting something in unison. The room is high and splendidly furnished, with a domed roof. A large pit is in the center of the floor. Many of the dark dwarves are gathered around the pit, swaying and chanting. There is an alcove in the west wall. Inside it, you can see a 10'-tall idol of gleaming gold; perhaps you have finally found the Muhalu! The idol is in the form of an ape standing on both legs and one arm. The other arm is raised and holding an iron ring. The end of a rope is tied to the ring, and the rope is run through another ring in the ceiling. The other end is tied around the ankles of a man, hanging upside down over the pit. The man has sandy hair and gray eyes. His features remind you of Arn Galter.

Beneath the reaching arm of the idol, a dwarf in a bizarre costume seems to be conducting a ceremony. He wears a wooden mask carved into an ugly leering face, and a tunic of leopard skin and red feathers.

The man hanging over the pit is Korman, soon to be the final sacrifice for the utuchekulu's spell of summoning. The utuchekulu in the costume is Ajoga, the high priest. Three lesser priests stand on the west side of the pit; their statistics are equal to those of the priests in room 15. There are nine warriors present, three on the north, south, and east sides of the pit. Chief Bulazi stands on the north side; the only distinguishing feature of him is his *spear +2*. A squad of six champions stands in a line next to the south wall.

Ajoga: AL LE; AC 8; MV 9; C8; hp 34; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 13, D 16, C 16, I 15, W 15, Ch 11; ML 15; XP 2,000; has club, leather armor.

Spells: *command* –2, *cure light wounds* –2, *darkness, dust devil* –2, *hold person, silence 15' radius; dispel magic, animate dead* –2; *cure serious wounds, sticks to snakes.*

Bulazi: AL LE; AC 3; MV 9; F9; hp 60; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon; specialization with spear (+4/+5); S 17, D 16, C 17, I 11, W 10, Ch 14; ML 18; XP 1,400; has leather armor, shield, knife.

Seconds after the PCs first look into the room, Ajoga cuts the rope, and Korman plummets into the pit. The PCs hear a loud thud when he hits ground, out of sight in the depths of the pit. The PCs must act quickly to save him. Of course, the utuchekulu are outraged at any intrusion, both at the desecration of their temple and at the possibility that the PCs can somehow stop their ceremony, thereby halting their planned conquest of a human tribe. Thus, the utuchekulus fight with fury. The warriors and champions swarm to melee the PCs, attacking without letup. Bulazi at first stays in the back to shout commands. He is not a coward, but he is the only one with enough experience to direct the battle. If any PCs break through the cordon of warriors, Bulazi attacks them himself. Brave to a fault, and unwilling to show fear in front of his subjects, Bulazi fights to the bitter end. If Bulazi is slain, the other fighters must make morale checks every round; failure means that they flee from the building.

The clerics use their spells to the best advantage. First, a *silence* spell is placed on the doorway, so that PC spellcasters cannot cast magic from there. Second, the priests cast multiple *hold person* spells with the idea of covering as many PCs as they can. Since Ajoga

has the most powerful spells, he stays in the back, using them as needed. If he has time for casting, Ajoga targets PCs with *dust devil* and *darkness*. If the PCs retreat, Ajoga casts *animate dead* on any slain utuchekulus or PCs, creating zombies to help pursue the enemy; mindless untiring minions who plod after the PCs ceaselessly. If the PCs retreat outside, Ajoga pursues and casts *sticks to snakes* in their location. Fanatics to the end, the priests fight to the death in defense of the temple.

The statue is indeed the legendary Muhalu. It is not solid gold, however, only stone with a gold plating. The gold can be removed with difficulty, and it is worth 8,000 gp. There are two sets of chains and manacles near the Muhalu used to hold prisoners.

22. The Pit. If any PCs move down into the pit to aid Korman, they must move through 20′ of tunnel, a vertical shaft, and another 20′ to the bottom of a cavern; thus, it is a 40′ drop from the pit in room 21 to the floor of room 22. If any PCs arrive there no more than three rounds after Korman was dropped, read the following:

> At the bottom of the shaft, you find yourself in a huge cavern, nearly 20′ high. The young man is lying on the ground, with his leg bent at an unnatural angle. He is unconscious. A strange swirling light fills the cavern; it comes from an alcove on the west wall. The light is swirling faster and faster. Sometimes, the light stops, and you see glimpses of a sun-washed jungle beyond the alcove, as if looking through a window.

Korman has a broken right leg and a concussion. With his sacrifice, the utuchekulus' spell is complete, and the *gate* is opening, onto an alternate demi-plane of existence. The *gate* opens completely on the fourth round after Korman is dropped. If any PCs are present, read the following:

> The swirling light suddenly vanishes, and ordinary sunlight pours in through the alcove. In addition to seeing the jungle beyond the alcove, you can now hear the cries of birds and monkeys, and the strong odor of a seashore fills the cavern. The sight is suddenly cut off as a huge creature steps into view, nearly filling the alcove. It is a gigantic golden-haired ape which carries a long bone club in one hand. With a roar of hunger and rage, the ape steps into the cavern, heading toward the unconscious man on the floor. As he exits the alcove, the vista of the jungle vanishes, revealing an alcove of plain stone.

The monstrous ape is a real muhalu, an ape as large as a hill giant (16′ tall), but as strong as a storm giant. It carries a club made from an elephant's femur. The utuchekulus' long ceremony opened a *gate* to a strange demi-plane of many tropical islands inhabited by gargantuan apes. (This is the plane described in module WG6 *Isle of the Ape.*)

The magic has also bent the will of the ape to that of Ajoga, placing it under his command. The tripe plans to use the muhalu to lead them in their conquest of a human tribe; few natives possess the power to defeat such a foe combined with the spears and spells of the utuchekulus. Note that the *gate* closes and vanishes once the muhalu comes through.

Muhalu: INT low; AL N; AC 3; MV 15; HD 15; hp 75; THAC0 5; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1–10+12 or 2–12/2–12/2–24; MR 20%; SZ L; ML 20; XP 4,000; new monster

If the PCs are not present, the muhalu devours Korman and then climbs out of the pit to obey Ajoga's commands. If any PCs are present, the muhalu attacks them first, hoping to slay and devour them. If Ajoga has been slain, the muhalu is uncontrollable, attacking and devouring any person to cross his path, whether utuchekulu or PC. The muhalu first fights with its club, but the weapon is brittle, and has a 20% cumulative chance per round to shatter. The muhalu then fights with hands and teeth. The muhalu has low intelligence, but it dimly knows that it cannot go home, so it will fight to the death.

Korman: AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; F5; hp 14 (normally 34); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA specialized with short sword (+1/+3); S 16, D 16, C 15, I 14, W 11, Ch 15; ML 15.

Concluding the Adventure

If many utuchekulu survive, they pursue the PCs. Their plan is to overtake the PCs, get ahead of them, and ambush them. If this fails, they next attack at night, trying to silence the sentry and kill the others in their beds. If this also fails, the utuchekulus try a direct attack, trying to kill as many PCs as possible before their morale breaks. If the PCs survive all three attacks, the utuchekulus give up and retreat to their ruins, a broken people.

To complete their task, the PCs must return Korman to Fort Thunder, alive or dead. However, they still face the long trek back through the jungle, with the usual encounters. The PCs find Korman to be a friendly and grateful man who is willing to do his share of the work, although he does not perform suicidal acts. If the PCs return him to Galter, both father and son are happy and indebted to the PCs. This could lead to more job offers in the future, as the Galters pass on more rumors on legendary treasures. Details are left to the DM.

As there are several possible outcomes to this adventure, the DM may wish to grant story awards. If Korman is rescued and returned alive, award each PC 2,000 XP. If Korman is slain, but his body is returned, award only 1,000 XP. If Korman is never recovered, alive or dead, no XP are awarded.

Ω

A WATERY DEATH

Continued from page 31

hear of Alvazar's demise, but she will not miss the opportunity to finance the PCs' expedition to the *Sea Whisper* at the cost of just 10% of the profits.

The nereid may also become an invaluable ally in the realms of sea adventures, but this is all subject to the DM's campaign world. If the DM does not mind the PCs incorporating such an NPC into their repertoire of contacts, then the party might encounter Jonquil from time to time along the seashore; otherwise, the nereid departs from the party after this adventure never to be seen again. One thing is for certain: any PC attempting to take possession of Jonquil's soul-shawl meets with deadly opposition. The nereid does everything in her power to assure that she is not enslaved again, and that includes using her drowning kiss. Ω

Froghemoth

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical swamp
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal
TREASURE:	See below
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	2 (tentacle), 4 (body), 6 (tongue)
MOVEMENT:	2, Swim 8
HIT DICE:	16
THAC0:	5
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–8 tongue, 5–50 bite, 5–8 tentacle
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Tongue, swallows whole, surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	H (18′ long, 10′ wide)
MORALE:	fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	9,700

Froghemoths are gigantic, slightly humanoid amphibians with two 15′ tentacles in place of each arm (four total) and a froglike head with toothed jaws and eyes and nostrils mounted on 3′ stalks. It is a menace of the waterways of the Dark Continent, a foe that no animal and few humans can match. The froghemoth is light green, with a yellow underbelly and thighs. The eyes are intense shining orange.

The beast moves painfully slow on land, in short hops, but its webbed feet propel it through water and mud with ease. Thus, it rarely leaves the swamps and rivers.

Combat: The 16 HD statistic applies only to the body of the froghemoth. Each tentacle has a separate hp total of 19–22, and the tongue has 12–16. The usual attack is with its four tentacles, which are hard and leathery. However, it usually lies in ambush, submerged so that only its eyes and nostrils are above water. If undetected, the froghemoth leaps up to ambush those within reach, gaining a –1 on the surprise roll. The tongue is 10′ long and wickedly barbed. Anyone struck by it suffers 1–8 dmg and is held fast. The tongue retracts instantly, drawing the prey to the mouth for a bite attack. On a natural hit roll of 19–20, the froghemoth swallows its prey whole. Otherwise, the bite inflicts 5–50 dmg.

Opponents who are not surprised but are captured by the tongue, can make a dexterity check to grab hold of a solid object and prevent his being pulled to the froghemoth's mouth. However, the tongue has a strength of 18/50, so the victim must have superior strength to keep his hold. If the tongue is severed, the froghemoth flails madly with its tentacles, doing double damage per hit for 2–5 rounds. After this, the froghemoth must make morale checks every round; failure means it abandons the fight.

Those who are swallowed whole must be rescued quickly. The stomach acids inflict 4–16 hp damage per round, and the victim falls unconscious after two rounds. When the victim's hp reach –10, he is completely dissolved. Before falling unconscious, the victim can fight with knives and daggers.

Froghemoths are immune to normal fire, but magical fire inflicts half or one quarter damage, depending on the saving throw. Electric attacks do only 1 hp damage per die, and slow the creature to half normal movement and attacks for one round. Cold and acid attacks do normal damage. Froghemoths have a slow regeneration and can replace lost limbs in 2–5 weeks, including the tongue and tentacles.

Habitat/Society: Froghemoths are solitary, each claiming large tracts of swamp for hunting territory. They meet only in spring to mate, and females lay up to 100 1″-long eggs. Few survive the cannibalistic frenzy that occurs upon hatching; the survival rate to adulthood is only 1–3%. Offspring reach maturity in three years. Hatchlings are tadpoles, with a tail and gills. Over time, the tail shrinks to nothing, the gills disappear, and the legs and tentacles sprout and grow.

Froghemoths live only in areas where there are many large prey animals. Like other amphibians, they can live for weeks on one large meal. Their only real lair is a pool of water, 10–100′ deep.

Ecology: Froghemoths are primal carnivores, eating anything they can catch. Few creatures can kill an adult; dragons and dinosaurs could, but are not inclined to do so. Hatchlings fall prey to other large aquatic carnivores, such as crocodiles. Froghemoths have only incidental treasure, items dropped by their victims. As these items fall into the mud of the beast's lair, a froghemoth's treasure can be difficult to find and even harder to recover.

Human, Pygmy

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Jungle
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Village
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low to genius (3–18)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	11–20 or 20–50 (lair)
ARMOR CLASS:	10 or better
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	1 or more
THAC0:	20 or better
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or more
DAMAGE PER ATTACK:	By weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison, surprise
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Concealment
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	S (3–4′ tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE:	35 or more

Pygmies are small humans who live in the deepest jungles of the Dark Continent. They were once widespread, but competition with taller neighbors has forced them to live in small pockets of unwanted jungle. Superficially, pygmies look like small versions of other natives, with brown or black skin, dark eyes, and tightly coiled black hair. They wear little other than loincloths of animal skin. Often, the tails of the hides are left intact and dangle behind them. This has led to the rumor that they have tails. Pygmies live by hunting and foraging, having no domestic animals or plants. They have no metallurgy skills, instead they obtain metal tools and weapons by trading with other natives. Pygmy NPCs roll for statistics as other races (range of 3–18), but fighters do not have exceptional strength.

Combat: Pygmies combine the woodcraft of elves with the stealth of halflings. They are able to conceal themselves in thick jungle foliage so well that they are considered to be *invisible* (detected only by magic). If aware of enemies, they attack from concealment with a –4 bonus to surprise. Pygmies use hunting poison on their arrowheads (see sidebar). Their weapons include the short bow, flight arrow, club, knife, spear, and machete. When using short bows of their own making, pygmies have a +2 bonus to hit.

If faced with superior forces, pygmies use guerrilla tactics. Like elves, pygmies may move, fire a bow once, and move again, all in one round. Pygmies move quietly and quickly through foliage, and leave no trace of their passage (as *pass without trace* spell). If they have time to prepare, pygmies leave nets strung across trails to impede movement; when intruders stop to cut down the nets, the pygmies attack from ambush. When forced to fight in their villages, pygmies use shields.

Habitat/Society: Pygmies live in villages of up to 50 inhabitants. The population consists of 1/3 men, 1/3 women, and 1/3 children. The men are mainly fighters (F1), but 1–2 are priests (P1–8), 2–8 are champions (F2–4), and one is a chief (F5–8). There is a 50% chance that one man in the village is a ranger (R1–8). Like all humans, pygmies may be of any class and rise to any level.

Pygmies are mainly neutral or neutral good; few turn to evil. While not deliberately cruel, they do not allow strangers to disrupt the ecology of their realms. Those who come with peaceful intentions are 75% likely to be met with friendliness; otherwise, the pygmies simply demand that the intruders leave, and attack if the strangers refuse. The best way for outsiders to be accepted is to approach openly and offer gifts to the chief. This action guarantees a friendly reception, provided the guests behave themselves.

The pygmies survive by hunting and gathering. They have no agriculture and are forced to be nomadic, moving from area to area to hunt and gather. Their huts are quickly constructed structures of wood and bark.

Ecology: Pygmies are omnivorous, eating any food they find: wild game, insect larvae, eggs, fowl, and wild fruit. They do not live in isolation, and they trade with their taller neighbors. Pygmies offer meat and hides in trade for salt, metal, and cloth. Pygmies have no detrimental impact on their environmental, never hunting game to excess nor cutting down living trees.

Mammal, Tropical

	Chimpanzee	Hippo	Giant Hippo	Pygmy Hippo
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Jungle	Tropical rivers	Tropical rivers	Tropical rivers
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon	Common	Rare	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Troop	Herd	Herd	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day	Any	Any	Any
DIET:	Omnivore	Herbivore	Herbivore	Herbivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low	Animal	Animal	Animal
TREASURE:	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	5–20	1–100	1–20	1–4
ARMOR CLASS:	7	6	6	6
MOVEMENT:	12, Climb 9	9, Swim 12	9, Swim 12	9, Swim 12
HIT DICE:	2	8	10+5	4
THAC0:	19	13	11	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3	1	1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–2/1–2/1–4	3–18	6–24	1–8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Charge	Charge	Charge
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil	Ni	Ni
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard
MORALE:	Unsteady (5–7)	Steady (11–12)	Steady (11–12)	Poor (6–7)
XP VALUE:	65	975	1,600	175

Chimpanzee: These are small apes that live in troops dominated by the largest male (15–16 hp). They look comical, but adults are irritable and aggressive. Chimps have tan or brown skin, black hair, and long canine teeth; they eat meat as well as plants. They are mature at eight years, and can live up to 40 years. The largest males reach 5′ tall and weigh 175 lbs.

Chimps fight with their hands and teeth, but usually flee from danger into the trees. They will not attack large groups of humans. However, lone humans are fair game.

Chimpanzees live in tight troops within a distinct territory. Where two territories overlap, the troops may fight over the disputed ground. Intruders are greeted with a "smile" that exposes the canines. This is a warning, not a friendly gesture.

Chimps eat fruit, insects, small game, bushpigs, and eggs. Large predators will kill straggling chimps, but most avoid facing the whole troop. Humans sometimes capture young chimps as pets. Playful and docile when young, adult chimps become dangerous and aggressive.

Hippopotamus: These huge pachyderms have wide jaws, tusks, and short tails. They are common on the rivers of the Dark Continent and spend much of their time in the water. They are irritable and unpredictable. They are infamous for coming up under boats on rivers, capsizing them and attacking the swimmers. Coming between a hippo and water prompts an immediate attack.

Hippos use their powerful jaws in combat. Males cause 3–18 hp damage, females 2–12 due to their smaller tusks. If able to charge at least 50′, the four-ton body knocks prone any man-sized opponent, who is then trampled for 2–11 hp damage for each front foot that hits.

Hippos live in loose herds that meander along the rivers. One may encounter one hippo one day, and dozens the next. Intruders prompt the hippos to yawn, exposing their tusks. This is an aggressive warning, not sleepiness. Hippos must roll in mud or water daily, as their skins dry out quickly.

Hippos eat large amounts of grass and water plants. Their actions and wastes are important in maintaining the ecology of the rivers. Adults are usually safe from predators, but young fall prey to crocodiles and lions. Humans hunt hippos for their hides (10–40 gp) and tusks (20–120 gp each).

Giant Hippopotamus: Sometimes called behemoths by northerners, these are a prehistoric relative of the common hippo. They look and live much like their smaller kin. Males cause 6–24 hp damage, females 4–16. Their trampling damage is 3–18 per foot. Their hides (20–50 gp) and tusks (40–240 gp each). Giant hippos live only in isolated lakes and rivers.

Pygmy Hippopotamus: These are smaller versions of the common hippo, but still reach 600 lbs. They are shy and solitary animals, rarely found in large groups. Males cause 1–8 hp damage, females 1–6 hp damage. Humans do not value their hides or tusks.

Utuchekulu

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Tropical jungle
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low to high (3–18)
TREASURE:	M (individual), B (lair)
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	3–30
ARMOR CLASS:	By armor type
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	1–6 hp or by class and level
THAC0:	by class and level
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or more
DAMAGE PER ATTACK:	by weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Tooth, poison, traps
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Resistance to poison
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	S (3' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15–16)
XP VALUE:	35 or more

The utuchekulu are an offshoot breed of dwarves that live in the jungles of the Dark Continent. They have ebony skin, black hair, and dark eyes. Their most distinguishing feature is the single blood red fang that protrudes from one side of their mouth. The utuchekulu have been sundered from their northern kin since primeval times, even longer than the duergar, evolving separately in the jungle. Sometime in their past, the utuchekulu mixed with something foul and unnatural. Today, they are an evil, man-eating people

Although they are dwarfish in ancestry, the utuchekulu have little resemblance to their northern kin. Utuchekulu do not live underground, and thy have thin and scanty beards, often shaved. However, they do retain their dwarfish abilities to working with metal and stone and have a dwarf's resistance to poison and magic (*PBH*/21).

Combat: Where northern dwarves wield axes and hammers, the utuchekulu carry spears, short bows, knives, clubs, and machetes. They have a special method of preparing rhino and hippo hides into very hard and durable leather. Armor made from this has a base AC of 7. If the utuchekulu has surprise against an opponent, he can leap up to 5' and attack with the fang. With surprise, the fang does 2–12 damage; without surprise, the fang causes only 1–6 damage. The utuchekulu use hunting poison on their arrowheads (see sidebar). The utuchekulu excel at building blinds for ambushes. When attacking from an ambush, the utuchekulu gain a –2 bonus on the surprise roll. They area also known to set numerous pits and snares around their lairs.

Habitat/Society: Like other dwarves, the utuchekulu excel at working stone. But instead of digging underground, they prefer to occupy abandoned stone ruins (there are many on the Dark Continent) and rebuild them. Every clan has two or three smiths to make tools and weapons of steel.

The utuchekulu live in tribal bands, usually ruled by the strongest fighter. Priests are respected advisors, but they do not rule. The bulk of the men are warriors; hunters, champions, defenders. A village's population will be 2/3 women and children, 1/3 adult men.

The utuchekulu survive mainly by hunting game and humans. Women and children forage for small game, eggs, grubs, and fish. Utuchekulu are zealous man-eaters and hunt humans as game.

Utuchekulu may be fighters, thieves, clerics, fighter/thieves, or fighter/clerics. They have the same level limits as normal dwarves.

Ecology: Utuchekulu are omnivores, eating much the same food as humans, except for their man-eating habits. While northerners will kill them as foes, natives of the Dark Continent have superstitious fears of their spiritual powers, and avoid them. Of course, any native tribe attacked outright will defend itself, but natives do not go looking for the utuchekulu.

Hunting Poison:
The pygmies have developed a special poison made from certain beetle larvae, used to bring down large game. The poison is placed only on arrowheads. Anyone hit by a poisoned arrow must save vs. poison at –2. Failure means that the victim is slowed (as the spell) one round later, and paralyzed two rounds after being hit. The paralyzation lasts 1–4 turns. One hour after the victim has been poisoned, the poison completely breaks down, and dead game is safe to eat. A successful save means that the victim suffers no ill effects.

The utuchekulu also use hunting poison, but a much more potent version. Again, it is used only on arrowheads. Anyone hit must save vs. poison at –2. Failure means that the victim is slowed one round after being hit, paralyzed the second round, and dead the third round. Even a successful save causes the victim to be slowed one round after being hit and paralyzed for the next three rounds. The poison breaks down completely two hours after the initial poisoning

MAP SYMBOLS

These symbols are used on most maps in DUNGEON® Adventures.

DOOR

DOUBLE DOOR

SECRET DOOR

LOCKED DOOR

WIZARD-LOCKED DOOR

CONCEALED DOOR

BARRED DOOR

PORTCULLIS OR BARS

WINDOW

ARROW SLIT

FIREPLACE

COVERED PIT

OPEN PIT

FOUNTAIN

SPIRAL STAIRS

STATUE

STAIRS

TRAP DOOR IN CEILING

TRAP DOOR IN FLOOR

SECRET TRAP DOOR

them to its own. Now it looks like a giant troll with multiple heads, arms, and legs. These parts were attached without thought or reason, and the troll's natural regenerative powers helped forge the parts into this monstrous whole.

The patchwork troll guards this clearing and the ruins within when it isn't hunting through the mud-flat jungle. When it notices all of the activity near the ancient library, it moves in to destroy the intruders. In many ways, this monster is still fighting the Cleansing Wars. For this reason, it targets humans and wizards first, though it defends itself from other character races and types.

Esturren, aware of the monster's presence and sure that Talid's agents are following him, makes just enough noise to get the troll's attention. It arrives just as the PCs reach the ruins. The defiler hopes it can destroy the PCs or at least keep them busy while he finishes casting his spell. The spell takes 24 hours to cast, and Esturren is already 8 hours into the process. Now he leaves the PCs to the troll while he begins the next stage of casting.

> A terrible roar rumbles out of the jungle, and a great monster rushes toward you. It appears humanoid, standing 10′ tall, with hunched shoulders, sunken eyes, and a long, pointed nose. You also see that it has extra body parts jutting from its rubbery flesh: a head emerging from its back, extra arms and legs, and plenty of sharp, grasping claws.

If the PCs defeat the patchwork troll, it regenerates in 1d10 days. The only way to destroy it completely is to kill it and burn all the pieces. If even one piece remains or is lost in the mud, the patchwork troll returns. By that time, however, the PCs can finish their mission and leave the Grave.

The patchwork troll attacks before the PCs enter the library. As it battles the PCs, they can hear arcane words being spoken inside the ruins, and any wizards or clerics in the party can sense the gathering of dark magical energy all around them. The best bet is for some of the PCs to stay with the troll while the rest go inside to confront Esturren.

If the PCs ignore the troll and enter the library, the troll follows them. Inside, it attacks everyone. Esturren takes advantage of the troll's attacks on the party to strike when the PCs look away or are hit by the troll. Of course, if it gets a chance, the troll attacks Esturren as well.

Patchwork Troll: INT average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 12; HD 10; hp 64; THAC0 11; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d12/1d12; SD regenerate; SZ L (10′ tall); ML 16; XP 3,000.

Psionics Summary: MAC 5

Conclusion

The PCs must bring some evidence of Esturren's death back to Talid, or they must return with the living defiler. If the PCs do either of these things, they earn the friendship of the Ravagers. Talid also gives them 50 gp each and an enchanted *bone long sword +2*. The PCs must determine which member of the party can make the best use of the weapon.

If the PCs can't prove that Esturren has been destroyed, Talid banishes them into the desert without any supplies save their own clothes and weapons. He continues to watch for and hunt for the defiler, though he'll never find him if Esturren was lost in the mud flat. In this case, if the PCs ever again encounter Talid or the Ravagers, it will be as enemies.

If Esturren is allowed to complete the spell, the lush Troll Grave Chasm dies and the defiler becomes a full dragon of immense power. His first goal is to take control of the Bandit States. Then he sets his sights on the Tyr Region. Ω

ing down his lungs.

You read the inscription one last time, praying silently that this will work and that poor Shyleen will not be made to suffer the loss of his friend.

"Charisis." The sound echoes off the ancient stone walls. Suddenly the light filtering through the roof and foliage above grows brighter. The rays burst through and bathe the room in a soft white glow. A beautiful female voice whispers into your ears. "Noble people, your cause is just."

And then all is quiet. The light slowly fades, and you gaze at Janx. He sleeps, but his chest moves with strong, clear breaths. He is healed.

Shyleen is beside himself with joy but bear in mind that the remaining wolves continue their nightly attack on the village. The PCs should not forget their responsibility to protect the townsfolk.

Concluding The Adventure

The party are treated like heroes for repelling the attack of the wolves and defending the village. Whether or not it was negotiated beforehand, Marie Dumont rewards the party with 100 gp from the coffers of the farmer's collective. If Janx is healed, Shyleen gratefully gives the PCs his *necklace of protection +1*. He also offers them the meager contents of his purse, but if they're honorable, PCs will not take the man's last few pennies.

For successfully defending the town and preventing any casualties each PC is awarded 100 XP. For capturing Janx, PCs should receive a further 50 XP, and if they find the temple without the help of Brother Michael and use its powers to heal Janx, they deserve another 100 XP each.

Ross and Bess prepare a great dinner for the party and Shyleen, while Tracy makes a thick meat stew for Janx. Everyone in the vicinity packs into the Tavern to hear the party tell (and retell) the details of the fights with the wolves and the heroic rescue of Janx. For the night, at least, the PCs are local heroes. Shyleen and Janx part ways with the PCs and journey homeward the following day.

Of course, a party of adventurers won't find much to keep their interest in Davyd's Rest. Life is simply too dull. But they may hear from Marie Dumont about a problem with the river in Ashbourne and strained relations between the village and a nearby tribe of goblins.

Another adventure that fits nicely into the framework of this one is "The Fountain of Health," from DUNGEON issue #39. Rather than hunting for The Temple of Davyd, the PCs can search for the ancient fountain to heal Janx. Simply adjust the information provided by Brother Michael and Bruce Dreg.

Ω

Coming Attractions

Scheduled adventures for Issue #57:

To Cure a King by John A. Hartshorne — AD&D® Adventure, levels 5–8

Carcass Fracas! by Stephen J. Smith — AD&D SideTrek Adventure, level 1

The Rose of Jumlat by Jeroen Grasdyk — AL-QADIM® Adventure, levels 3–7

The Murder of Maury Miller by Cameron Widen — AD&D Adventure Levels 1–2

And *More!*